The Lost Battalion

by Buck Private McCollum

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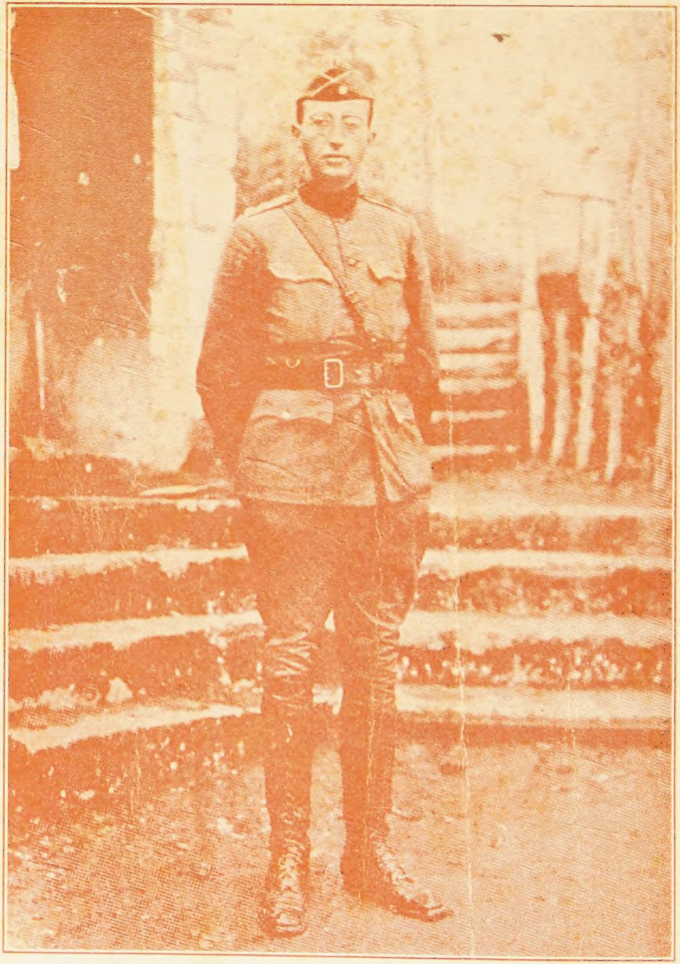
HISTORY AND RHYMES OF THE LOST BATTALION



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LIEUT. COL. CHARLES W. WHITTLESEY
Commander of the "Lost Battalion"

HISTORY AND RHYMES OF THE LOST BATTALION

By

"Buck Private" McCollum

Sketches by
Franklin Sly
and
Tolman R. Reamer

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Ten Hundredth Thousand

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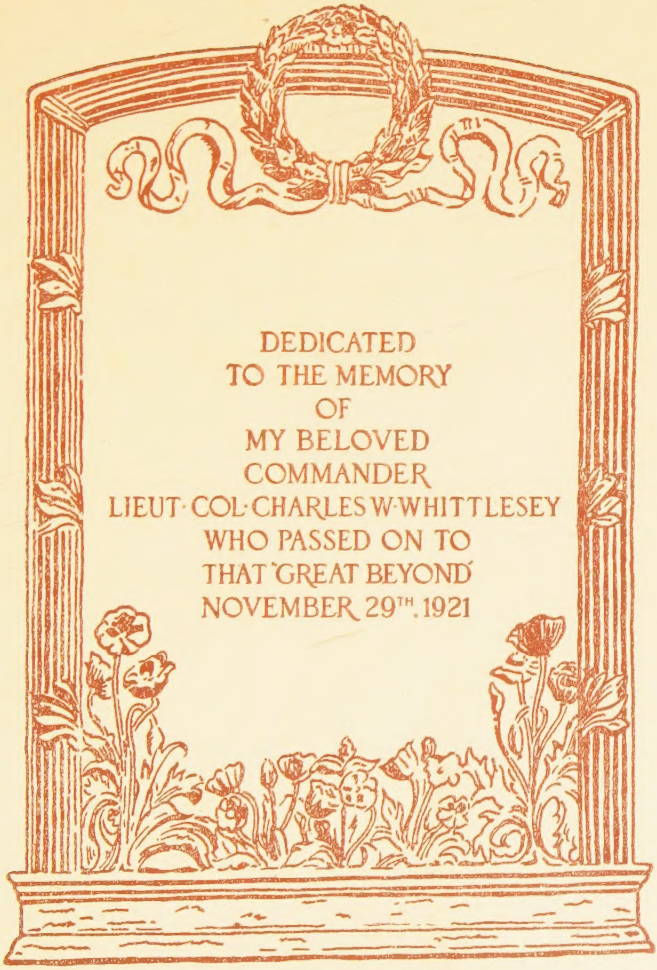
DEDICATED
TO THE MEMORY
OF
MY BELOVED
COMMANDER
LIEUT·COL·CHARLES W·WHITTLESEY
WHO PASSED ON TO
THAT 'GREAT BEYOND'
NOVEMBER 29TH. 1921

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A Tribute

Written expressly for this publication by Lieut. Col C. W. Whittlesey, Commander of "The Lost Battalion"

As one of the members of a regiment that fought in France, the memories that are most vivid with me, now that two years have gone since the war has ended, are the memories of the nights and days when the simple unknown soldiers of the regiment showed their fineness under trial. In a forest in north-eastern France in a cold and damp October, without rations, without surgical attention, cut off, as they supposed, from the notice of their fellow men, they gave to the day's hardships and duties a courage and plain human kindliness that will always make one proud of the record of the American soldier. Such achievements are not attributable to any officer or group of officers or leaders. They arise from brave men working unselfishly together with faith in the cause which they serve. When an individual shows courage under stress, we feel a thrill at his achievement, but when a group of men flash out in the splendor of manliness we feel a lasting glow that is both pride and renewed faith in our fellow men. And as a member of such a regiment, for which I feel deep affection, I feel a bond of understanding and fellowship for the American soldier in every place and time, doing his job simply and finely, asking neither sympathy nor praise. May the armistice be lasting, and these great qualities find their true place in Peace.

November 11, 1920.

Clarke W Whittlesey

Memorial Address

By COL. N. K. AVERILL
of the 308th Regiment

At Services of Lieut. Col. Charles W. Whittlesey

We of the 308th have come to pay a last tribute to the memory of our loved comrade and friend Charles Whittlesey.

I speak for the heart of the regiment when I say that we all are mindful of his outstanding character, mindful first of that attribute given to few men, the absolute lack of fear, seen and known by many of us before that day when he sprang into world-wide fame. Ordered to advance thru the densest part of the thicket of the great forest of the Argonne to take a certain fixed objective and hold it, he succeeded, and alone with his battalion reached the designated point far in advance of the troops on his right or left. The enemy soon surrounded his position, and then began those numerous attacks lasting four days and nights. Over one hundred hours passed without food of any kind and with but little water. With the majority of his command killed or wounded, surrounded by the dead and dying, with no succor or help for the wounded and yet when the call for the surrender came, how instantly he refused it, and took in at once the only bit of white showing—the white of the ground panel for signalling to the Air Service; thus saying "They shall not pass" and no Hun passed save from the Here to the Hereafter. No man as a soldier can stand higher in the history of the republic and no man is more entitled to the nation's gratitude.

Mindful too of the wonderful mind, we were more impressed by that stern and strict conscience, the

inheritance of those Puritan ancestors, a conscience always sure of the right and from which line of action no power could ever make him change. Coupled with all this was the highest sense of duty I have ever seen.

Mindful too of that other side of his character, the gentle and sympathetic nature which was so marked on all occasions, causing him to be known as "Brother Charles," I know that I speak for all of us when I say that it has been given to none to ever meet a man who more closely approached that knightly Bayard of old in that he was without fear and without reproach.

While at first we were stunned and could hardly credit the news, yet the more I think his case over the more firmly I am convinced that his death was in reality a battle casualty and that he met his end as much in the line of duty as if he had fallen by a German bullet on the Vesle or in the Argonne. The scars of conflict or the wounds of battle are not always of the flesh. We, of the Regular Army have seen too often the results of mental strain, even in the older soldiers.

Let us briefly review his war service. Answering at once his country's call and coming from his quiet, scholastic life of a city lawyer, he was thrown almost immediately into the fiercest fighting the World has ever known. How heroically he arose to the emergency suddenly thrust upon him history will always tell, but what a mental strain it must have been on that shy, retiring, kindly and lovable man when he could do nothing to relieve the suffering or the agony of those gallant men dying beside him—and this after all had reached the last stages of physical

exhaustion due to a hundred hours constant fighting and hunger; with this were the unspeakable conditions and the horrors of the battle field where it had been impossible to bury the dead, and the sole responsibility rested on him. Whittlesey had that rare and moral courage which makes men great, and in that emergency he held on, to the everlasting credit of the American Army.

This occurred a little over three years ago, but he has never been away from those scenes from that day on. Coming back to this country, he found himself a popular hero much against his wishes and inclination. Constantly called upon for aid and advice by the mothers and widows of the dead and missing, he gave everything he had, everything that was in him—not only to them but to all the men of the regiment, wounded and in trouble—who found in him a ready friend, counselor and aid.

His last answer to the call of duty was on November 11th, 1921, when, with the other Medal of Honor Men of the regiment, McMurtry, Miles and Kaufman, he attended the final ceremonies at Arlington for the Unknown Soldier. I think we all can see him standing there with these memories of the suffering and pain of war surging through his mind. We know how he suffered until at last that great heart broke, but the memory of Charles Whittlesey will always be an inspiration to the officers and men who served with him in France.

I can only add, speaking for the regiment, that from the heart of each of us goes up the prayer that the God, who in His Infinite Wisdom saw fit to take from our midst Charles Whittlesey, may give to his soul that peace and quiet for which he so longed.

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Dear Reader:

My deep and sincere appreciation goes to the following people whose generous contribution of articles and photographs have made possible this little volume:

Major General Robert Alexander
Major George G. McMurtry
Captain Nelson M. Holderman
of California
Colonel N. K. Averill
The American Legion Weekly
William E. Moore
Private Lowell R. Hollingshead
Private Abraham Krotoshinsky

To the untiring efforts of the artists, two overseas Veterans, Franklin Sly, who recently passed on to that "Great Beyond," and Tolman R. Reamer, who completed the art work.

Sincerely yours,

"Buck Private" McCollum

Foreword

I've never had a fling at this thing
That folks call writin' an' such;
I haven't the art a genius owns
To put over the master touch.

I can only tell in a Doughboy's way,
Things that we all lived thru,
If perchance you were "O'er There,"
You'll know that they are true.

No artist, whether good or bad,
Can paint the sunset's glow;
Nor can any man who ever came back,
Describe that war and its woe.

So I lay no claim to the master's touch
In the thots I've expressed herein;
But when you've finished reading them,
You'll know what it cost to win.

You'll know how a Doughboy feels when
he fights,
And also the joys of his play;
So may you accept them just as they are,
In a Doughboy's own crude way.

"Buck Private" McCollum

Our Commander

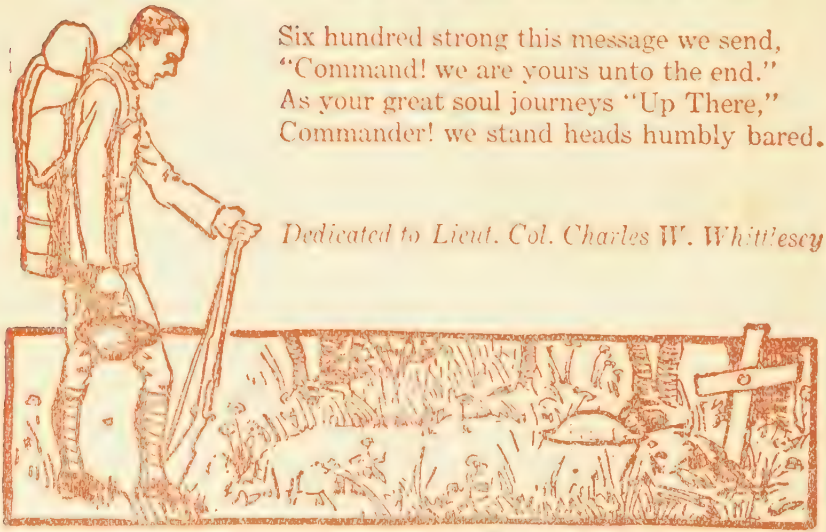
Six hundred strong, your boys and you,
Battle-twained in one, fast and true,
The endless nights "Over There;"
Commander! we stand heads humbly bared.

Six hundred souls travel apace,
With your long silent strides thru endless space,
Your journey by love of your men is bound,
As your last command falls without a sound.

Six hundred men slowly bow their heads,
With hearts that are heavy our tears are shed,
Weary and heart-sick and war-twained sad,
We mourn the best leader men ever had.

Six hundred strong this message we send,
"Command! we are yours unto the end."
As your great soul journeys "Up There,"
Commander! we stand heads humbly bared.

Dedicated to Lieut. Col. Charles W. Whittlesey



Up There

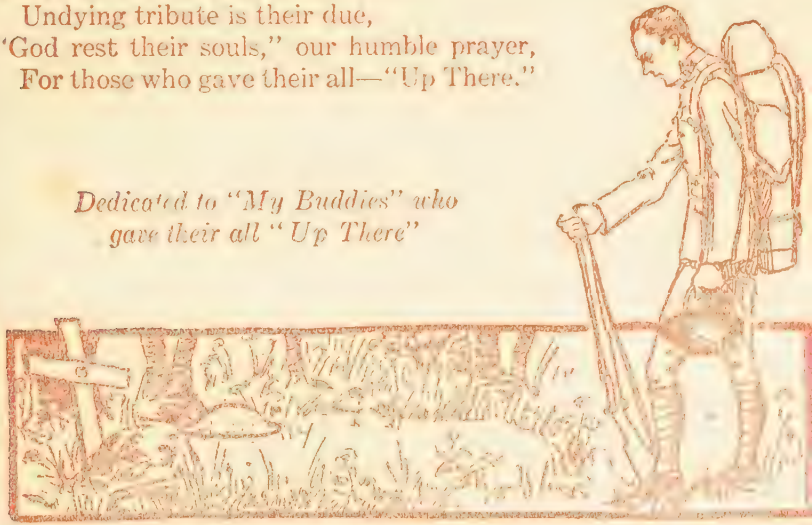
From two short words, "Up There" we glean,
All that war can really mean,
Sounds perhaps not much to you,
Entire volume, what we've been thru.

Telling many brave and daring tale,
Of Chateau-Thierry and the Vesle,
Or Argonne Woods, that death-strewn hell,
Where hordes of our brave comrades fell.

Who gave their all, as men have done,
Ever since wars first begun,
Their blood enriching vale or hill,
Patriot's promise, or God's will.

They fell for a cause just and true,
Undying tribute is their due,
"God rest their souls," our humble prayer,
For those who gave their all—"Up There."

Dedicated to "My Buddies" who gave their all "Up There"



Memory Lane

See the sky line glowing deep crimson red,
As tho 'twere washed by blood of our dead,
The men sprawled out in two's and three's,
On that barren gut of eternity.

The gleam of a watch on some one's wrist,
Showing dim and wet thru the fog and mist,
The jagged walls of some war-laid homes,
And the shadow of men like dwarfed gnomes.

The roar of the plane and tinkle of rain,
And the gang on their way to the front again,
Another forced hike in the dead of the night,
Stragglers falling out to the left and right.

The hushed stillness as we stopped near a road,
Then a Jerry's bomber dropping his load,
A tense death-like quiet before the bomb hit,
Then mangled horses and men part of it.

Cries for first aid, the shrieks of the mules,
And we huddled there like a bunch of fools,
Sergeant and Captain shouting for order,
An East side New Yorker yelling "It's moider."

The sea of red mud thru which we hike,
Thots of back home when a little tike,
Thots of that home and all it could be,
And me on my way to Eternity.

The clammy dampness of rain on the skin,
The dread yet the thrill of "going in,"
The rattle and whistle of shells overhead,
Thru that blood-washed sky of dull, dull, red.

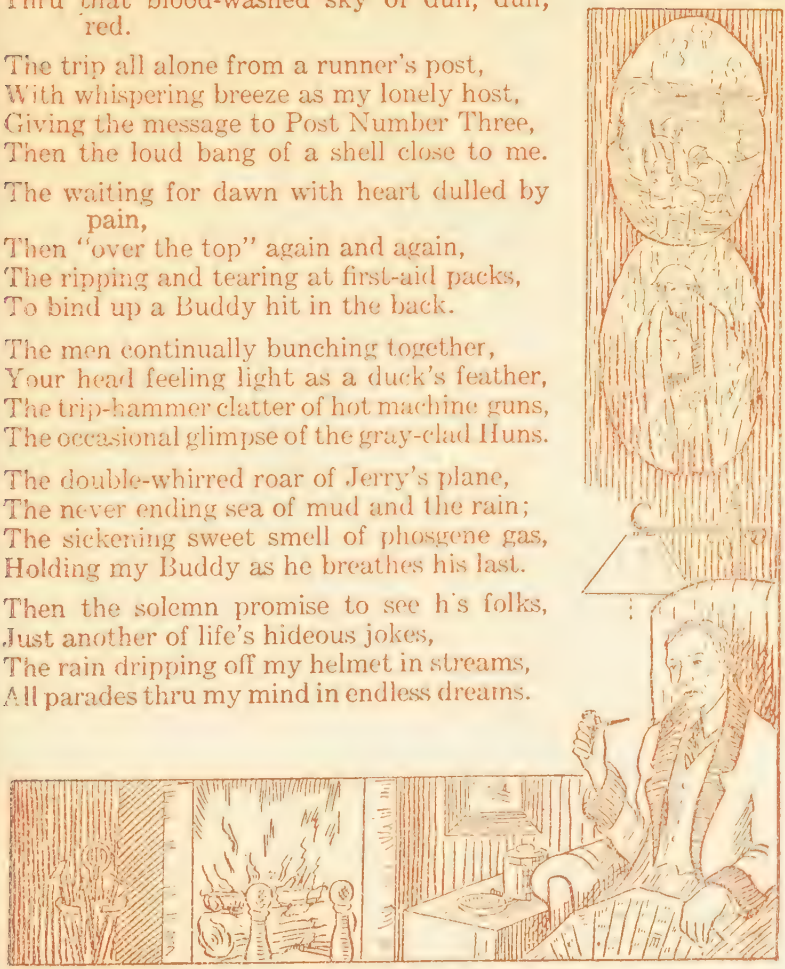
The trip all alone from a runner's post,
With whispering breeze as my lonely host,
Giving the message to Post Number Three,
Then the loud bang of a shell close to me.

The waiting for dawn with heart dulled by pain,
Then "over the top" again and again,
The ripping and tearing at first-aid packs,
To bind up a Buddy hit in the back.

The men continually bunching together,
Your head feeling light as a duck's feather,
The trip-hammer clatter of hot machine guns,
The occasional glimpse of the gray-clad Huns.

The double-whirred roar of Jerry's plane,
The never ending sea of mud and the rain;
The sickening sweet smell of phosgene gas,
Holding my Buddy as he breathes his last.

Then the solemn promise to see h's folks,
Just another of life's hideous jokes,
The rain dripping off my helmet in streams,
All parades thru my mind in endless dreams.



Bully Beef

Have you ever had your stomach,
In a mass of whirlin' pain,
While "doing your bit" Over There,
In the drippin' ice-cold rain.

With the mud up to your knee-caps,
And your shoes a-slushin' 'round,
On your way up to the front again,
Tired as a wind-broke hound.

Had your Serg' come runnin' yelling,
"Here comes the ration truck,"
You grabbed a can of Bully Beef,
Then sat right down in the muck.

Madly tore the tough old lid off,
With your bayonet's rusty blade,
Gulped it down in great big chunks,
And cared not how it's made.

It ironed out all the wrinkles,
And for the likes of you and me,
'Twas *Bully Beef* who licked the Kaiser,
And he earned a D. S. C.

Cooties

"Rhymes of a Lost Battalion Doughboy"

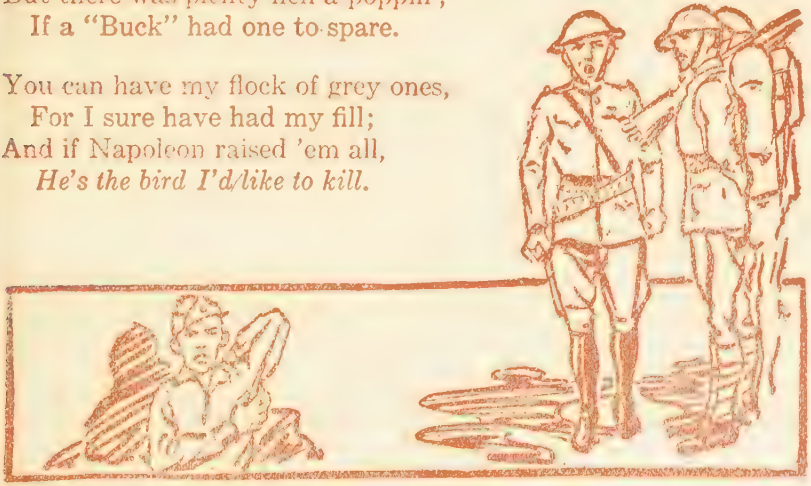
While you're standing at attention,
Cooties dart and duck below,
Then your lousy Captain bawls you out,
Ain't it Hell?—Well I'll say so!

Ever have that itchy army,
Doing squads both right and left,
On your tired and aching shoulders,
Or underneath your vest?

Or in your helmet-sweated hair,
Or on your pain-racked shins?
Way the little devils pinch and bite,
Makes you feel you've paid your sins.

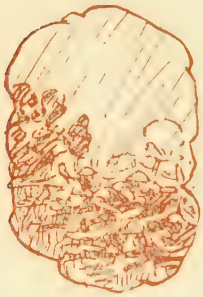
In the "lines" big Generals had 'em,
Every Captain raised his share,
But there was plenty hell a-poppin',
If a "Buck" had one to spare.

You can have my flock of grey ones,
For I sure have had my fill;
And if Napoleon raised 'em all,
He's the bird I'd like to kill.



"Rhymes of a Lost Battalion Doughboy"

Rain! Rain! Rain!



Ever since I landed here,
Things have looked so dull and drear,
Wonder if this war's in vain,
Wonder why there's so much rain?

My face and hands badly peeled,
Playing "Mock War" in sodden fields,
Body aches from chills and pains,
Still it rains and rains, and rains.

Tomorrow we'll be on our way,
To "The Front" I heard them say,
Tonight we loaded on the trains,
Wonder why it rains and rains?

The guy who wrote 'bout Sunny France,
Must have been in an awful trance,
Wisht ol' sun would come peepin' thru,
Perhaps I wouldn't feel so blue.

Clouds a-skootin' fast overhead,
Hiked thru mud 'till I'm damn near dead,
Gee! I'm wet clear thru to the skin,
Wonder when we're "Goin' In"?

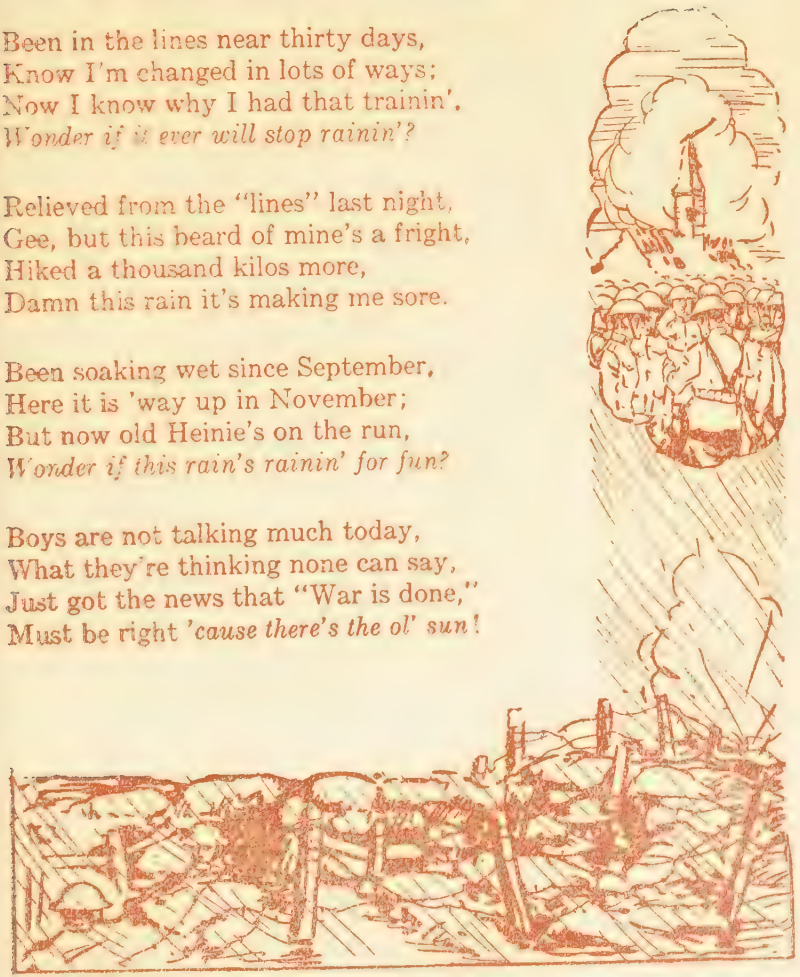
Earth seems to be a-quiver with fright,
Gosh, I'd like to be home tonight,
Never thot I'd be "Over Here,"
Lord, this rain makes a fellow feel queer.

Been in the lines near thirty days,
Know I'm changed in lots of ways;
Now I know why I had that trainin'.
Wonder if it ever will stop rainin'?

Relieved from the "lines" last night,
Gee, but this beard of mine's a fright,
Hiked a thousand kilos more,
Damn this rain it's making me sore.

Been soaking wet since September,
Here it is 'way up in November;
But now old Heinie's on the run,
Wonder if this rain's rainin' for fun?

Boys are not talking much today,
What they're thinking none can say,
Just got the news that "War is done,"
Must be right *'cause there's the ol' sun!*



Gassed

I've gone all day in sort of a daze,
Have felt the horror of death,
Don't mind the fight 'cause I know I'm right,
But I'm worried about my breath.

It feels like a ball of red-hot fire,
Turned loose from hell's own door,
There seems to be no relief for me,
It's hurting me more and more.

I can feel myself go crumpling,
And fall in a sudden heap,
Slowly the truth dawns upon me,
"Gassed last night in my sleep."

Doctor says I'll pull thru all right,
Will be good for a few more years,
I'm thinking of my mother dear,
And I just can't keep back the tears.

I've paid the debt that mankind brings,
To make an ideal stand true,
If perhaps I forget how to smile,
Remember, 'twas all for you.

Oh Boy!

"Rhymes of a Lost Battalion Doughboy"

Some day you'll be in your "civies,"
Struttin' your stuff down the street,
Just as sure as the stars above you,
Your favorite Lieutenant you'll meet.

Then you'll snap up to attention,
As you always did before,
But your mind has not forgotten,
The old unsettled score.

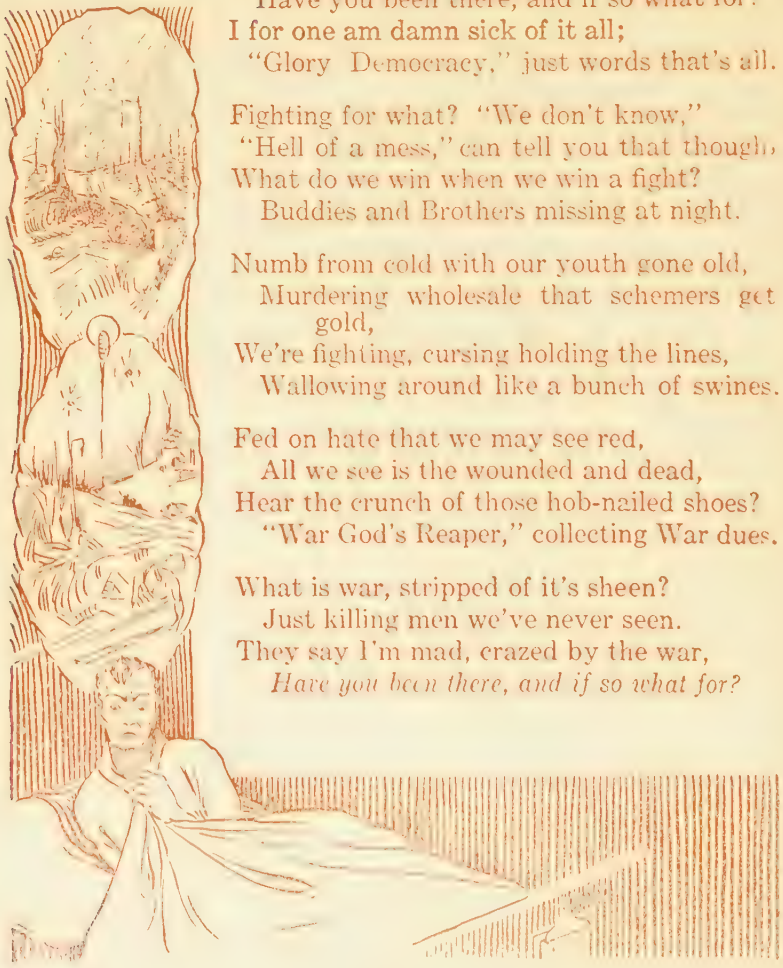
So your thots will quickly wander,
Way back to rainy France,
Your heart starts glowing happily,
For at last here is your chance.

So you'll bring your hand up smartly,
Till it's almost near your nose,
Your face breaks out in one wide grin,
As you say "Oh boy, here goes!"

The Lieutenant's face will redden,
But yours will light with joy,
It's the law of compensation,
And you earned it all my boy.

"Rhymes of a Lost Battalion Doughboy"

Fighting Mad



They say I'm mad, crazed by the war;
Have you been there, and if so what for?
I for one am damn sick of it all;
"Glory Democracy," just words that's all.

Fighting for what? "We don't know,"
"Hell of a mess," can tell you that though,
What do we win when we win a fight?
Buddies and Brothers missing at night.

Numb from cold with our youth gone old,
Murdering wholesale that schemers get gold,
We're fighting, cursing holding the lines,
Wallowing around like a bunch of swines.

Fed on hate that we may see red,
All we see is the wounded and dead,
Hear the crunch of those hob-nailed shoes?
"War God's Reaper," collecting War dues.

What is war, stripped of it's sheen?
Just killing men we've never seen.
They say I'm mad, crazed by the war,
Have you been there, and if so what for?

Over The Top!

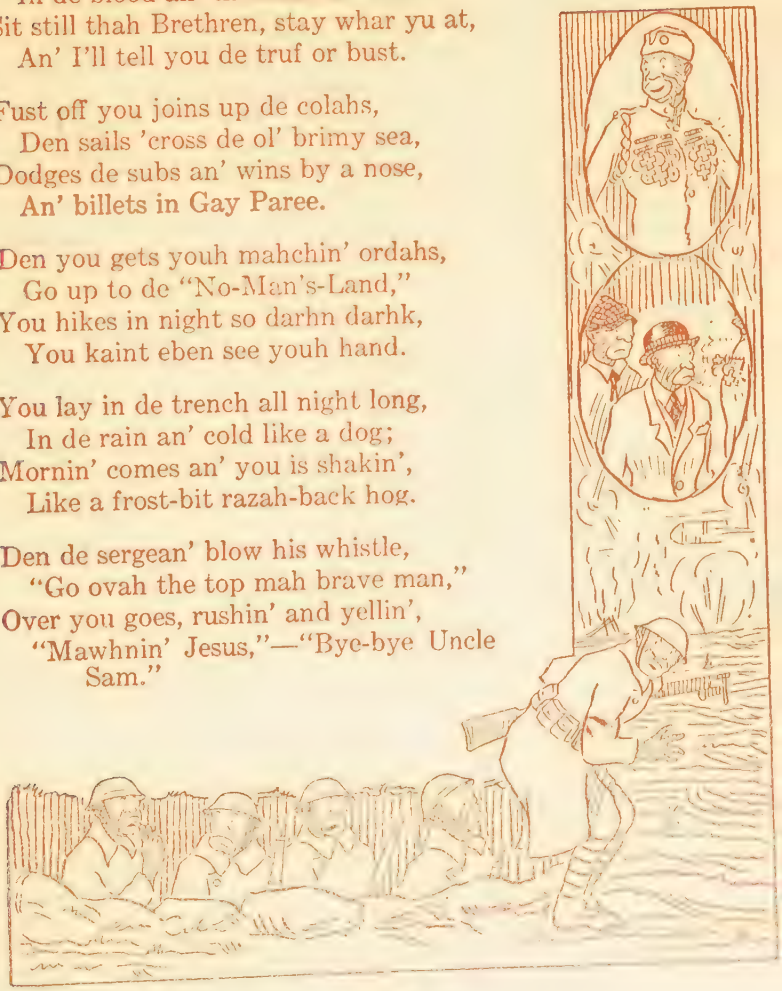
How do it feel to be solduah,
In de blood an' thundah an' dust?
Sit still thah Brethren, stay whar yu at,
An' I'll tell you de truf or bust.

Fust off you joins up de colahs,
Den sails 'cross de ol' brimy sea,
Dodges de subs an' wins by a nose,
An' billets in Gay Paree.

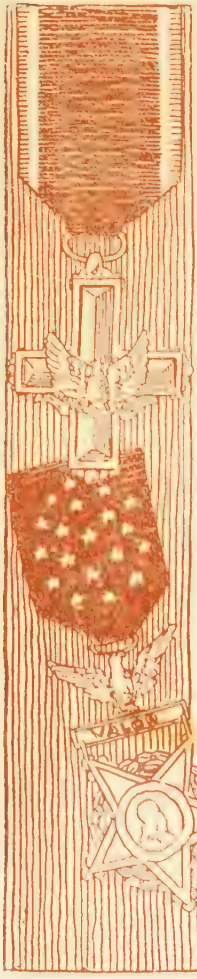
Den you gets youh mahchin' ordahs,
Go up to de "No-Man's-Land,"
You hikes in night so darhn darhk,
You kaint eben see youh hand.

You lay in de trench all night long,
In de rain an' cold like a dog;
Mornin' comes an' you is shakin',
Like a frost-bit razah-back hog.

Den de sergean' blow his whistle,
"Go ovah the top mah brave man,"
Over you goes, rushin' and yellin',
"Mawhnin' Jesus,"—"Bye-bye Uncle Sam."



The Medal



'Tis not the bit of bronze and metal,
That tells the time-worn tale,
Of some act of heroism
Where bullets whine and wail.

Nor are the colored ribbons,
Pinned on some strutting chest,
Always truthful indicators,
Of the men who fought the best.

Nor do gold stripes upon the arm
Always tell the story,
Of men who have seen action
Or fought their way to glory.

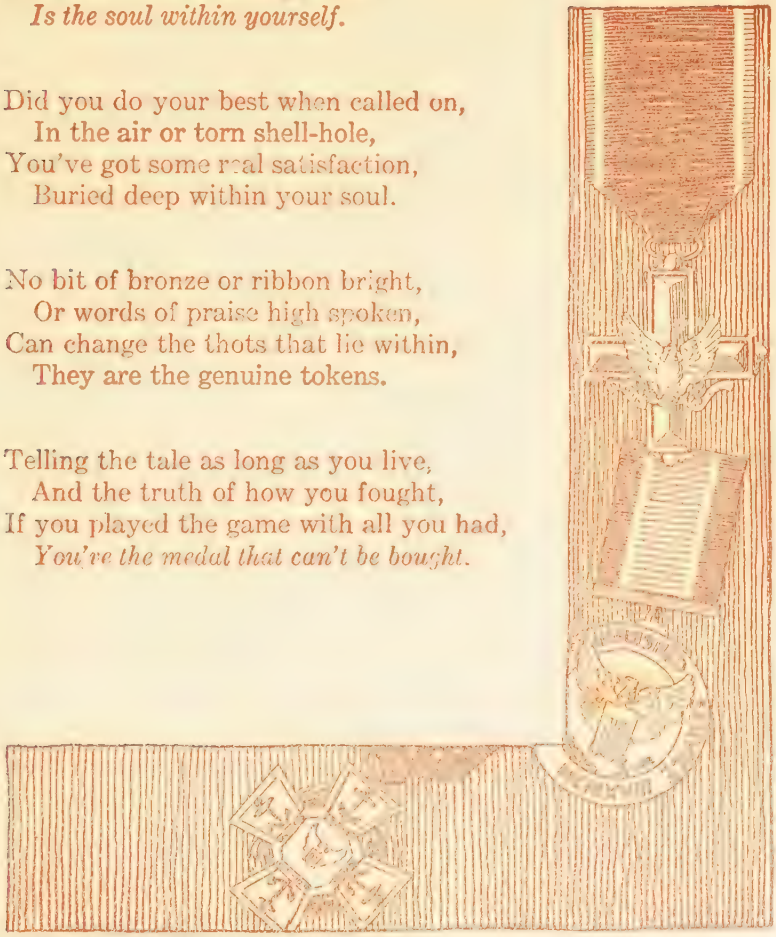
These are outward indications
Made by the hand of man,
Way they're sometimes passed about,
Is hard to understand.

They will tarnish with the weather,
In the plush or on the shelf,
For the real and lasting medal,
Is the soul within yourself.

Did you do your best when called on,
In the air or torn shell-hole,
You've got some real satisfaction,
Buried deep within your soul.

No bit of bronze or ribbon bright,
Or words of praise high spoken,
Can change the thots that lie within,
They are the genuine tokens.

Telling the tale as long as you live,
And the truth of how you fought,
If you played the game with all you had,
You've the medal that can't be bought.



Oui Oui Mon Cher!

One day in the rain, in quaint Cirfontaine,
I was walking down the street,
When I happened by chance in a window to glance,
And there sat a maid cute and sweet.

With big coy eyes, as blue as the skies,
Enter—she did me bid,
And wet to the skin, I walked in,
Sat down and took off me lid.

"Parlevou Franca?" was the best I could say,
To that beautiful French girl there,
"Mon Dieu mon pet," "But vous are wet,"
"It even dreep from your 'air."

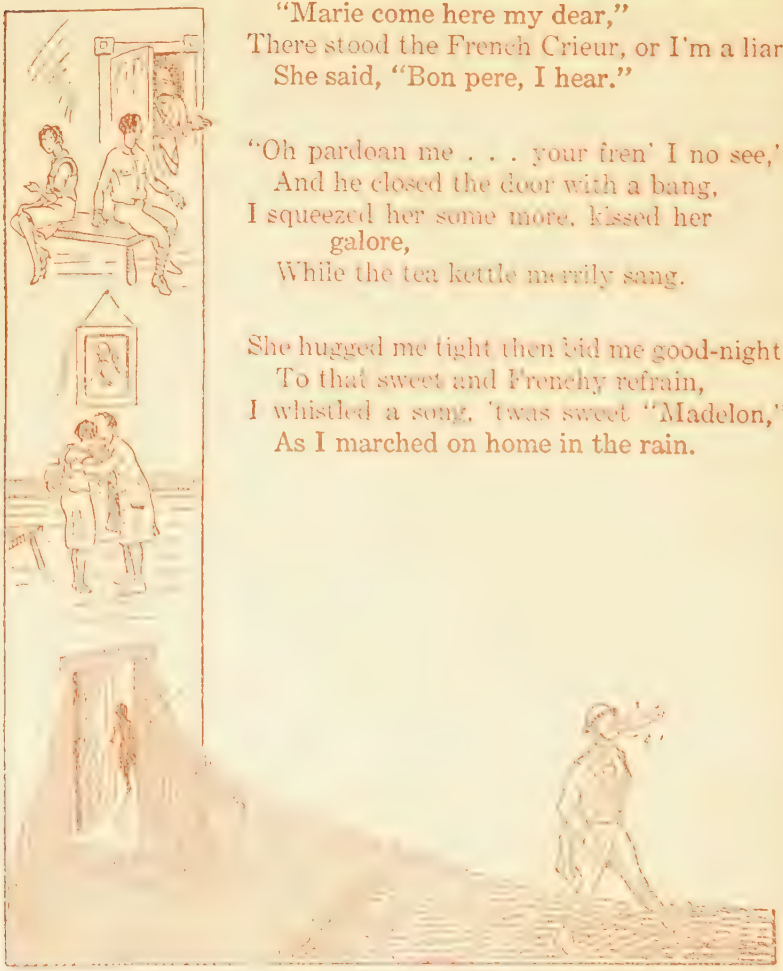
"Bonjour Monsieur, but you're a dear,
So beeg, an' strong, an' gran',
Seet in theez chair while I frire pomme-de-terre,
Mak' yourself 'ome onerstan'?"

So wet as a goat, I took off me coat,
And hung it close to the fire,
She peeled the spuds while I dried me duds,
And listened to the village Crieur.

You know how you feel when through a good meal,
With wine and a woman there,
And tho we both spoke, in languages broke,
Still we got on pretty fair.

"Monsieur please doan' "—"I know you're Tres Bon,"
"But no lak' I to hug an' squeeze;"
"Sess-pluvoir all day?"—"Oh please stay 'way,"
"See, now you startin' in to sneeze.

"Mon brave Soldat, stay right where you at,
'Un you kain keese my scheek;"
And was I sore when I heard a door
Slowly open with a squeek.



Then out of that room a big voice boomed,
"Marie come here my dear,"
There stood the French Crieur, or I'm a liar,
She said, "Bon pere, I hear."

"Oh pardoan me . . . your fren' I no see,"
And he closed the door with a bang,
I squeezed her some more, kissed her
galore,
While the tea kettle merrily sang.

She hugged me tight then bid me good-night
To that sweet and Frenchy refrain,
I whistled a song, 'twas sweet "Madelon,"
As I marched on home in the rain.

The Debt

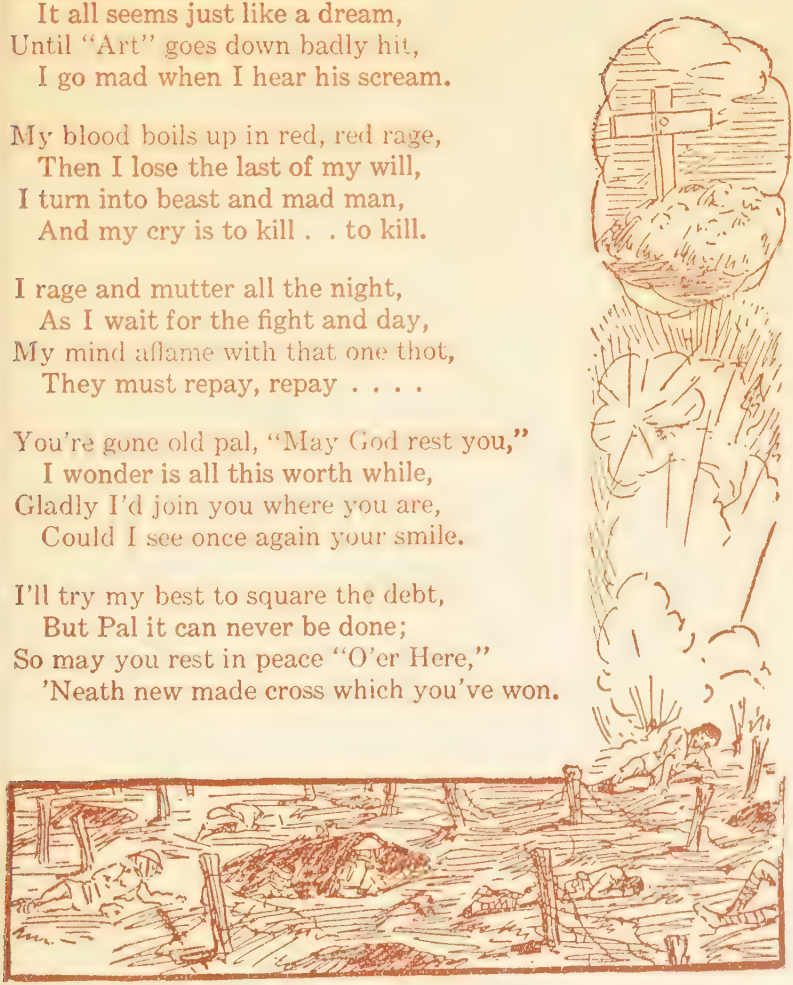
Most my pals are still around me,
It all seems just like a dream,
Until "Art" goes down badly hit,
I go mad when I hear his scream.

My blood boils up in red, red rage,
Then I lose the last of my will,
I turn into beast and mad man,
And my cry is to kill . . to kill.

I rage and mutter all the night,
As I wait for the fight and day,
My mind aflame with that one thot,
They must repay, repay . . . .

You're gone old pal, "May God rest you,"
I wonder is all this worth while,
Gladly I'd join you where you are,
Could I see once again your smile.

I'll try my best to square the debt,
But Pal it can never be done;
So may you rest in peace "O'er Here,"
'Neath new made cross which you've won.



My Pals

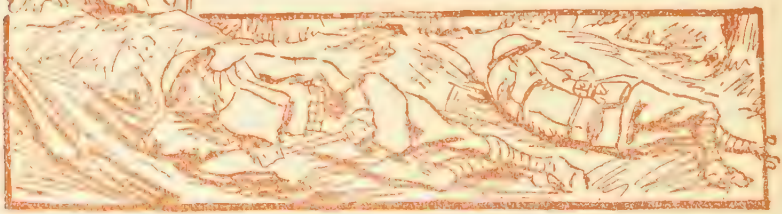
Of three Pals of mine I would tell,
And how they helped me live thru hell,
First, there's "Billy," my old gas mask,
For a better Pal you could never ask.

First time I used him (well I remember),
Was up in the "Argonne," late in September,
Gas alarm sounded, it brought a cold chill,
But with "Billy" on it changed to a thrill.

I pictured myself lying "Out There" dead,
But grabbed and put on old "Billy" instead,
Three hours we lived thru that hellish gas,
Since then he's my pal, first and last.

Next comes "Jim," my old "diggin' in" tool,
He was more than a pal except to a fool;
He helped me "dig in" both night and day,
Made me war wise in his own quiet way.

We dug thru rock and sometimes ground,
Then slept the sleep of a dog-tired hound,
And thru many battles of raging hell,
He was my Pal, and served me well.



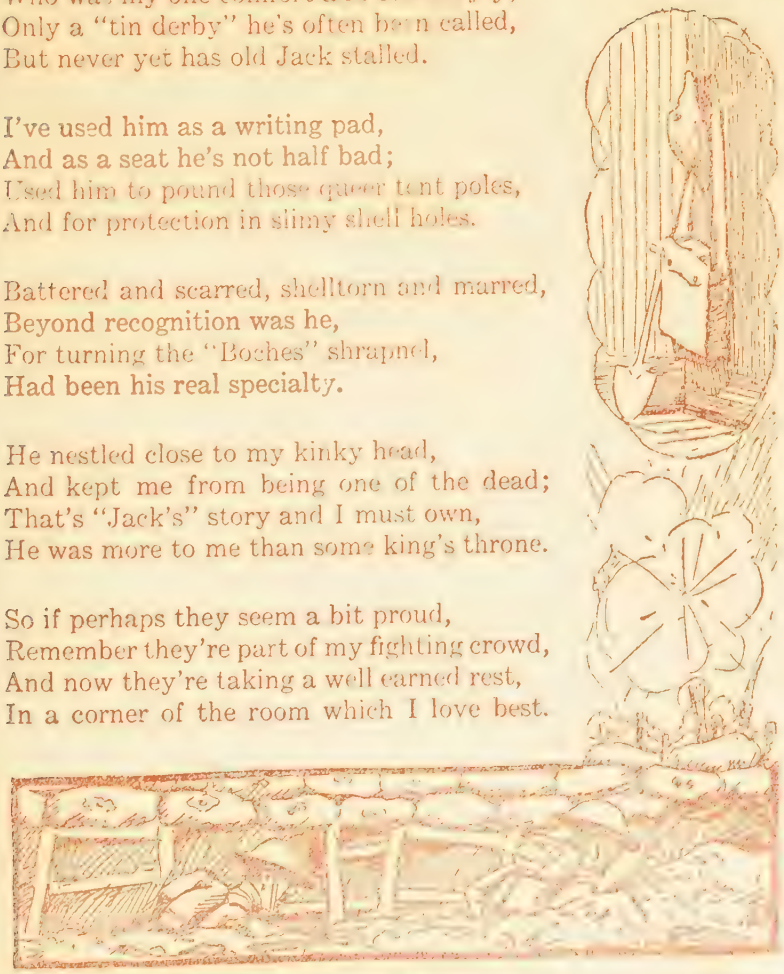
Last but not least, comes "Jack," that boy,
Who was my one comfort and eternal joy;
Only a "tin derby" he's often been called,
But never yet has old Jack stalled.

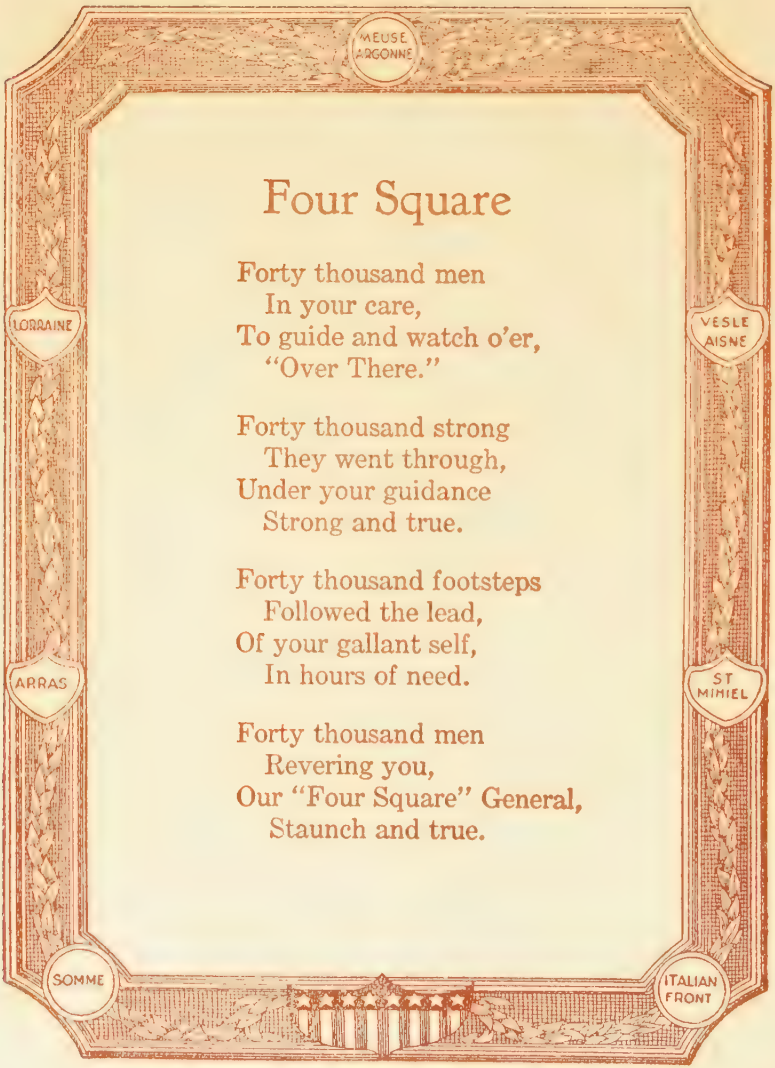
I've used him as a writing pad,
And as a seat he's not half bad;
Used him to pound those queer tent poles,
And for protection in slimy shell holes.

Battered and scarred, shelltorn and marred,
Beyond recognition was he,
For turning the "Boches" shrapnel,
Had been his real specialty.

He nestled close to my kinky head,
And kept me from being one of the dead;
That's "Jack's" story and I must own,
He was more to me than some king's throne.

So if perhaps they seem a bit proud,
Remember they're part of my fighting crowd,
And now they're taking a well earned rest,
In a corner of the room which I love best.





Four Square

Forty thousand men
In your care,
To guide and watch o'er,
"Over There."

Forty thousand strong
They went through,
Under your guidance
Strong and true.

Forty thousand footsteps
Followed the lead,
Of your gallant self,
In hours of need.

Forty thousand men
Revering you,
Our "Four Square" General,
Staunch and true.

MAJOR GENERAL ROBERT ALEXANDER

Commanding General of 77th Division

LIEUT. COL. C. W. WHITTLESEY
Commander of "Lost Battalion"
Awarded Congressional Medal of Honor

MAJOR GEORGE G. McMURTRY

Second in Command of "Lost Battalion"
Awarded Congressional Medal of Honor

CAPTAIN NELSON M. HOLDERMAN

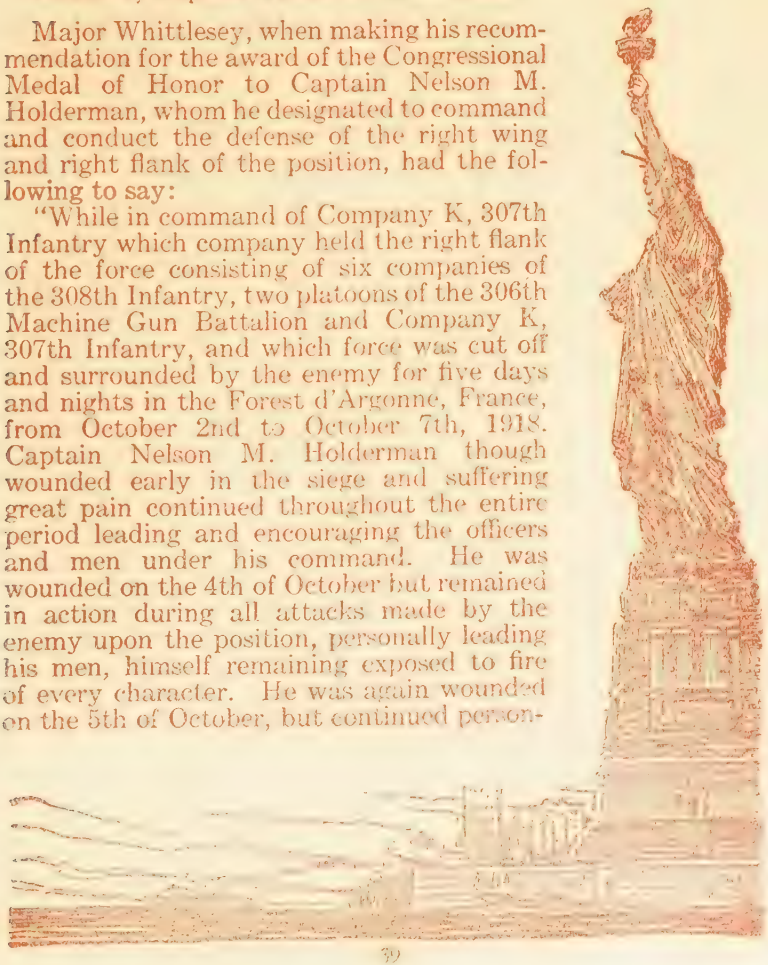
Command of right flank of "Lost Battalion"
Awarded Congressional Medal of Honor

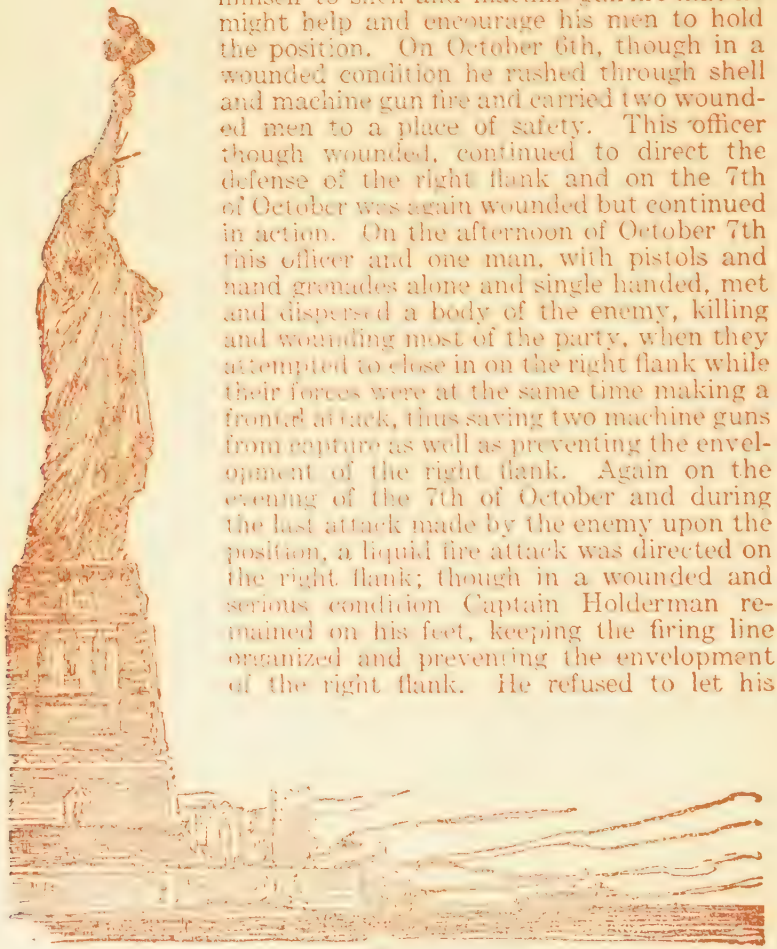
Captain Holderman's Citation

Reprinted in this publication exclusively by permission of Captain Nelson M. Holderman

Major Whittlesey, when making his recommendation for the award of the Congressional Medal of Honor to Captain Nelson M. Holderman, whom he designated to command and conduct the defense of the right wing and right flank of the position, had the following to say:

"While in command of Company K, 307th Infantry which company held the right flank of the force consisting of six companies of the 308th Infantry, two platoons of the 306th Machine Gun Battalion and Company K, 307th Infantry, and which force was cut off and surrounded by the enemy for five days and nights in the Forest d'Argonne, France, from October 2nd to October 7th, 1918. Captain Nelson M. Holderman though wounded early in the siege and suffering great pain continued throughout the entire period leading and encouraging the officers and men under his command. He was wounded on the 4th of October but remained in action during all attacks made by the enemy upon the position, personally leading his men, himself remaining exposed to fire of every character. He was again wounded on the 5th of October, but continued person-





ally organizing and directing the defense of the right flank against enemy attacks. During the entire period he personally supervised the care of the wounded exposing himself to shell and machine gun fire that he might help and encourage his men to hold the position. On October 6th, though in a wounded condition he rushed through shell and machine gun fire and carried two wounded men to a place of safety. This officer though wounded, continued to direct the defense of the right flank and on the 7th of October was again wounded but continued in action. On the afternoon of October 7th this officer and one man, with pistols and hand grenades alone and single handed, met and dispersed a body of the enemy, killing and wounding most of the party, when they attempted to close in on the right flank while their forces were at the same time making a frontal attack, thus saving two machine guns from capture as well as preventing the envelopment of the right flank. Again on the evening of the 7th of October and during the last attack made by the enemy upon the position, a liquid fire attack was directed on the right flank; though in a wounded and serious condition Captain Holderman remained on his feet, keeping the firing line organized and preventing the envelopment of the right flank. He refused to let his

wounds interfere with his duty until after relief was effected. The successful defense of the position was largely due to his courage. He personally led his men out of the position after assistance arrived and before permitting himself to be attended. The courageous optimism and inspiring bravery of this officer encouraged his men to a successful resistance in spite of five days fighting, hunger and exposure."

After Captain Holderman was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, Major Whittlesey wrote him the following letter:

"Dear Captain Holderman:

To my great delight I have just received a notification of the award to you of the Medal of Honor. I am enclosing herewith the carbon copy, although I know the information will have reached you direct.

This is the finest news in the world and I am looking forward with eagerness to passing it on to George McMurtry.

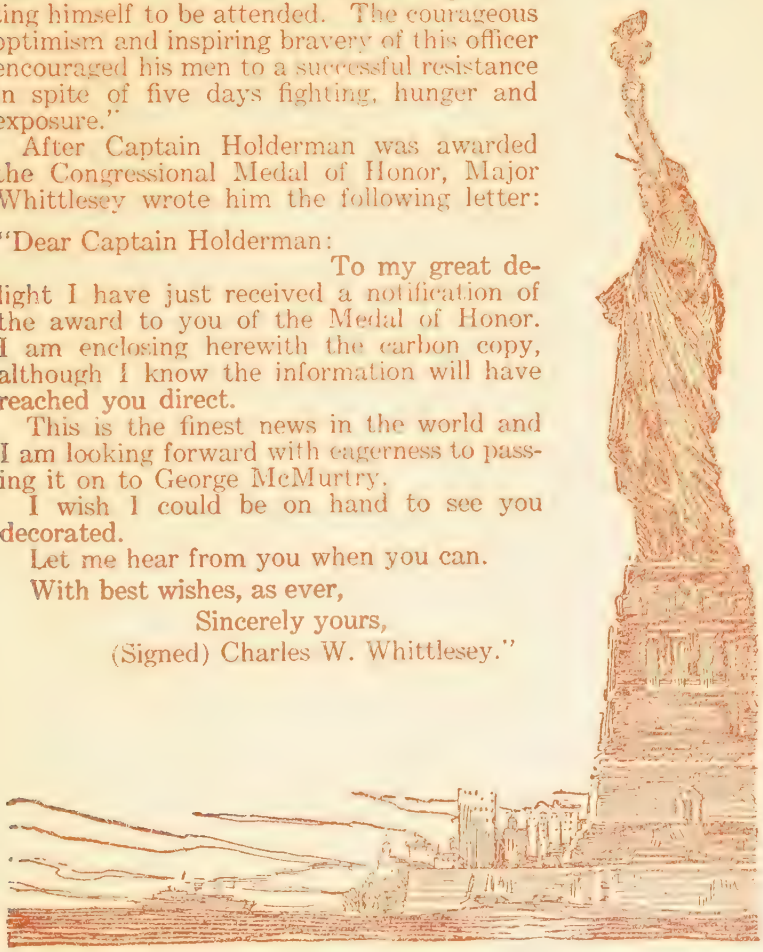
I wish I could be on hand to see you decorated.

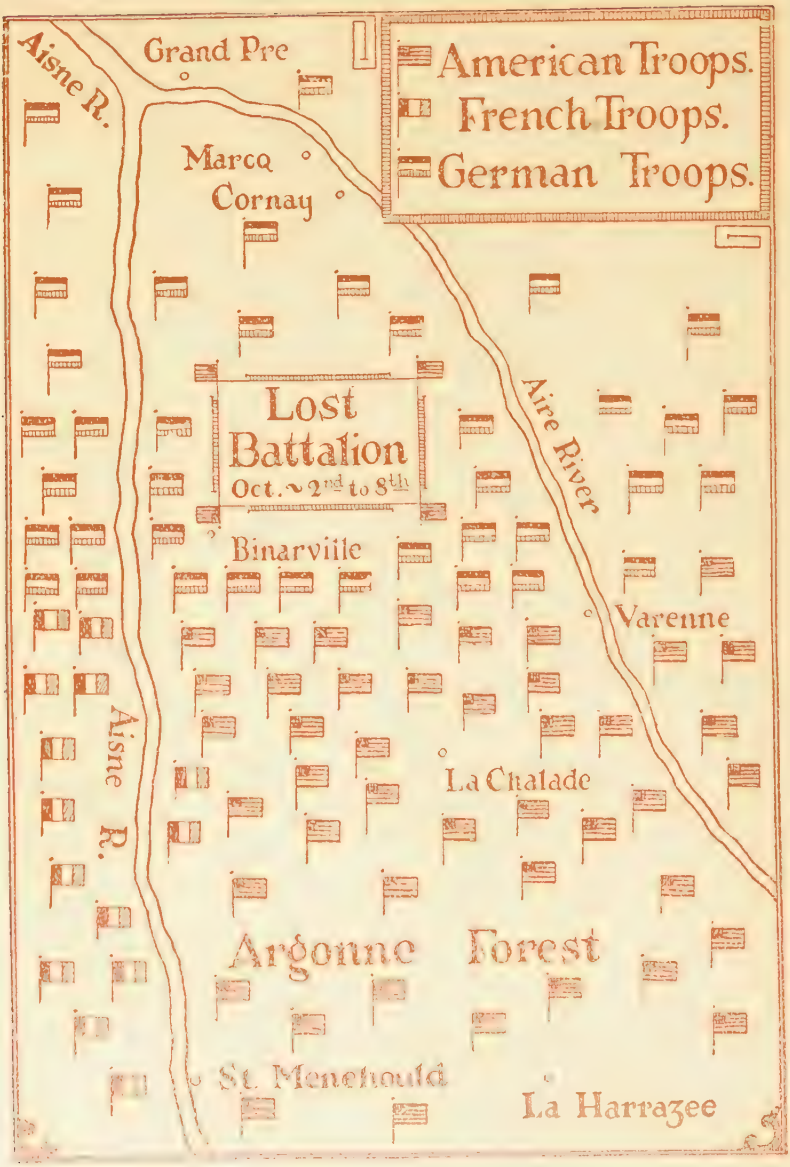
Let me hear from you when you can.

With best wishes, as ever,

Sincerely yours,

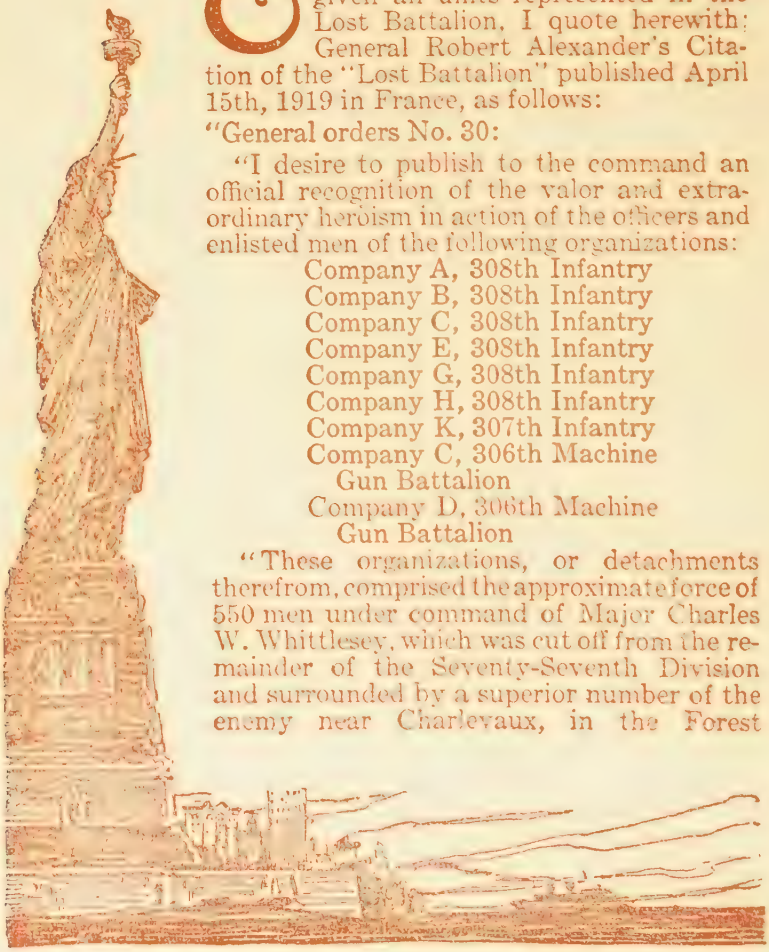
(Signed) Charles W. Whittlesey."




Aisne R.
Grand Pre
American Troops.
French Troops.
German Troops.
Marcq
Cornay
Lost
Battalion
Oct. 2nd to 8th
Aire River
Binarville
Varenne
Aisne R.
La Chalade
Argonne Forest
St. Menehould
La Harrazee

The famous "Pocket" of the Lost Battalion, near Charlevaux Mill, occupied by Whittlesey and his forces from October 2nd to October 8th, 1918.

History of The Lost Battalion



THAT proper recognition may be given all units represented in the Lost Battalion, I quote herewith: General Robert Alexander's Citation of the "Lost Battalion" published April 15th, 1919 in France, as follows:

"General orders No. 30:

"I desire to publish to the command an official recognition of the valor and extraordinary heroism in action of the officers and enlisted men of the following organizations:

Company A, 308th Infantry
Company B, 308th Infantry
Company C, 308th Infantry
Company E, 308th Infantry
Company G, 308th Infantry
Company H, 308th Infantry
Company K, 307th Infantry
Company C, 306th Machine Gun Battalion
Company D, 306th Machine Gun Battalion

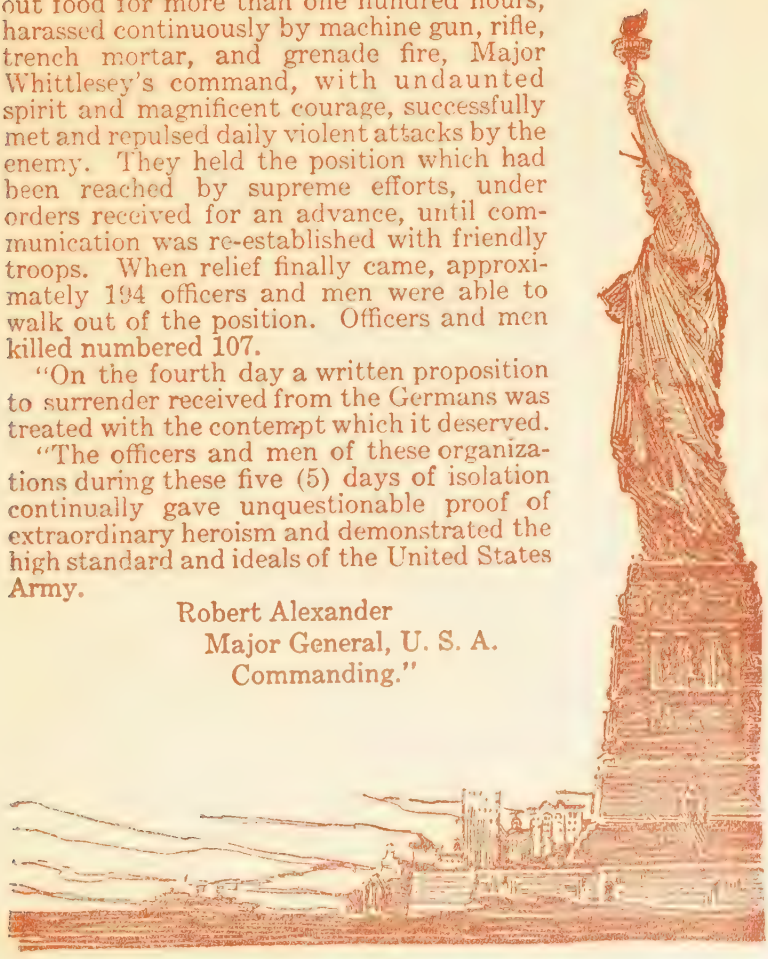
"These organizations, or detachments therefrom, comprised the approximate force of 550 men under command of Major Charles W. Whittlesey, which was cut off from the remainder of the Seventy-Seventh Division and surrounded by a superior number of the enemy near Charlevaux, in the Forest

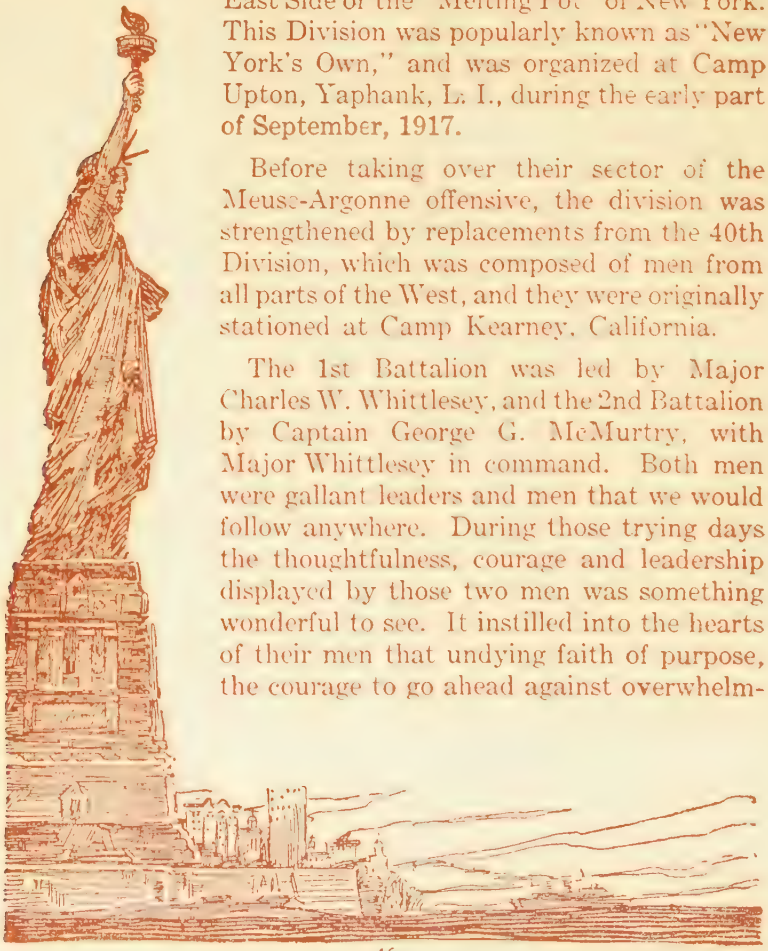
d'Argonne, from the morning of October 3, 1918, to the night of October 7, 1918. Without food for more than one hundred hours, harassed continuously by machine gun, rifle, trench mortar, and grenade fire, Major Whittlesey's command, with undaunted spirit and magnificent courage, successfully met and repulsed daily violent attacks by the enemy. They held the position which had been reached by supreme efforts, under orders received for an advance, until communication was re-established with friendly troops. When relief finally came, approximately 194 officers and men were able to walk out of the position. Officers and men killed numbered 107.

"On the fourth day a written proposition to surrender received from the Germans was treated with the contempt which it deserved.

"The officers and men of these organizations during these five (5) days of isolation continually gave unquestionable proof of extraordinary heroism and demonstrated the high standard and ideals of the United States Army.

Robert Alexander
Major General, U. S. A.
Commanding."





Originally the 77th Division was made up of New York men, almost entirely from the East Side or the "Melting Pot" of New York. This Division was popularly known as "New York's Own," and was organized at Camp Upton, Yaphank, L. I., during the early part of September, 1917.

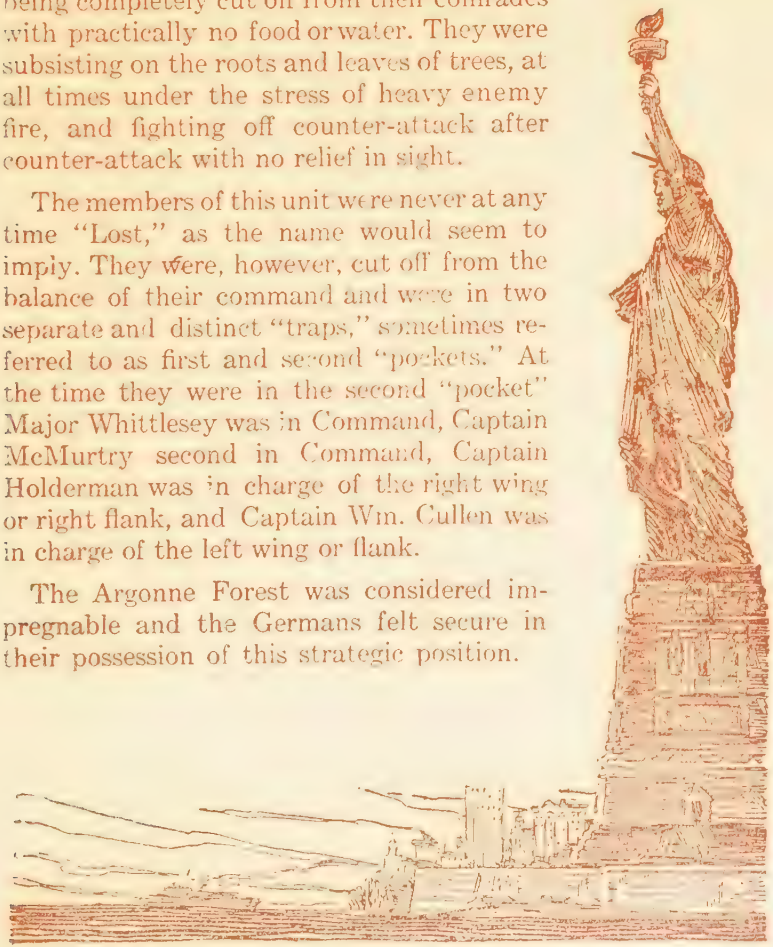
Before taking over their sector of the Meuse-Argonne offensive, the division was strengthened by replacements from the 40th Division, which was composed of men from all parts of the West, and they were originally stationed at Camp Kearney, California.

The 1st Battalion was led by Major Charles W. Whittlesey, and the 2nd Battalion by Captain George G. McMurtry, with Major Whittlesey in command. Both men were gallant leaders and men that we would follow anywhere. During those trying days the thoughtfulness, courage and leadership displayed by those two men was something wonderful to see. It instilled into the hearts of their men that undying faith of purpose, the courage to go ahead against overwhelm-

ing odds, and carried them through six indescribable days and nights of suffering after being completely cut off from their comrades with practically no food or water. They were subsisting on the roots and leaves of trees, at all times under the stress of heavy enemy fire, and fighting off counter-attack after counter-attack with no relief in sight.

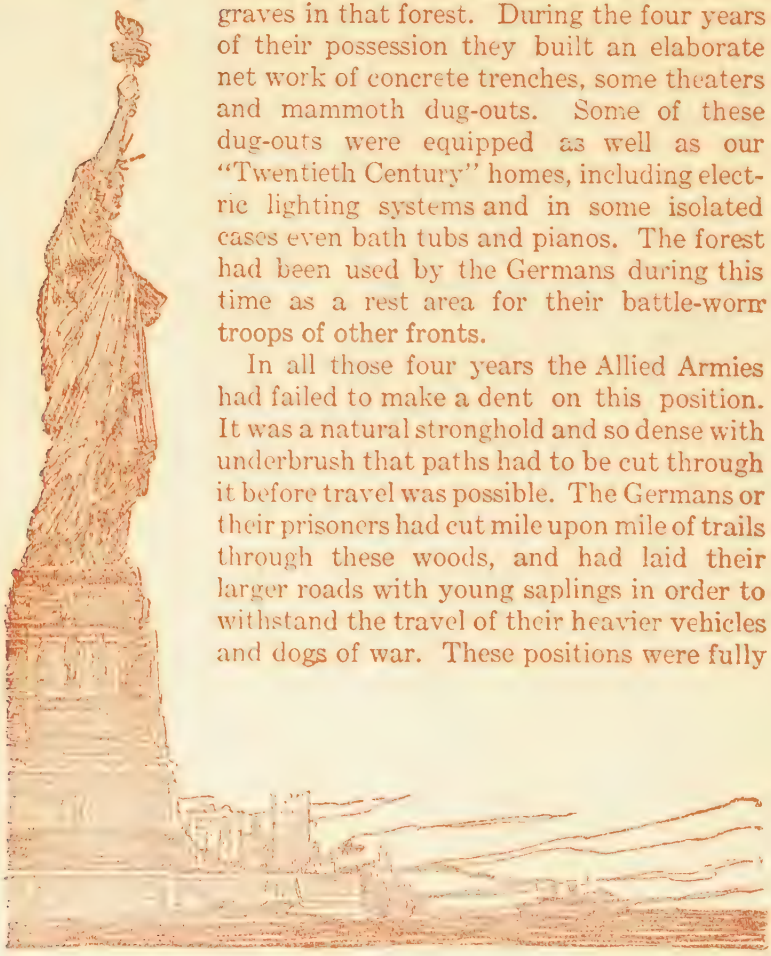
The members of this unit were never at any time "Lost," as the name would seem to imply. They were, however, cut off from the balance of their command and were in two separate and distinct "traps," sometimes referred to as first and second "pockets." At the time they were in the second "pocket" Major Whittlesey was in Command, Captain McMurtry second in Command, Captain Holderman was in charge of the right wing or right flank, and Captain Wm. Cullen was in charge of the left wing or flank.

The Argonne Forest was considered impregnable and the Germans felt secure in their possession of this strategic position.



That they never anticipated this stronghold ever being taken from them is mutely proven to this day by the wonder work that some of their sculptors carved in great rocks which still stand silently guarding German graves in that forest. During the four years of their possession they built an elaborate net work of concrete trenches, some theaters and mammoth dug-outs. Some of these dug-outs were equipped as well as our "Twentieth Century" homes, including electric lighting systems and in some isolated cases even bath tubs and pianos. The forest had been used by the Germans during this time as a rest area for their battle-worn troops of other fronts.

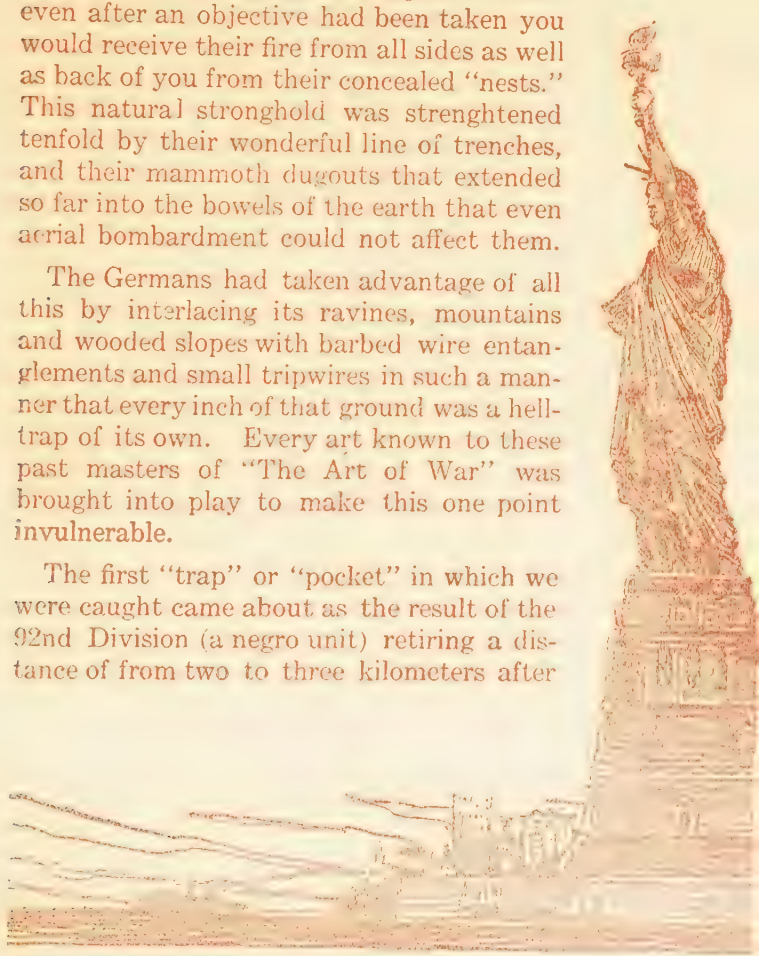
In all those four years the Allied Armies had failed to make a dent on this position. It was a natural stronghold and so dense with underbrush that paths had to be cut through it before travel was possible. The Germans or their prisoners had cut mile upon mile of trails through these woods, and had laid their larger roads with young saplings in order to withstand the travel of their heavier vehicles and dogs of war. These positions were fully

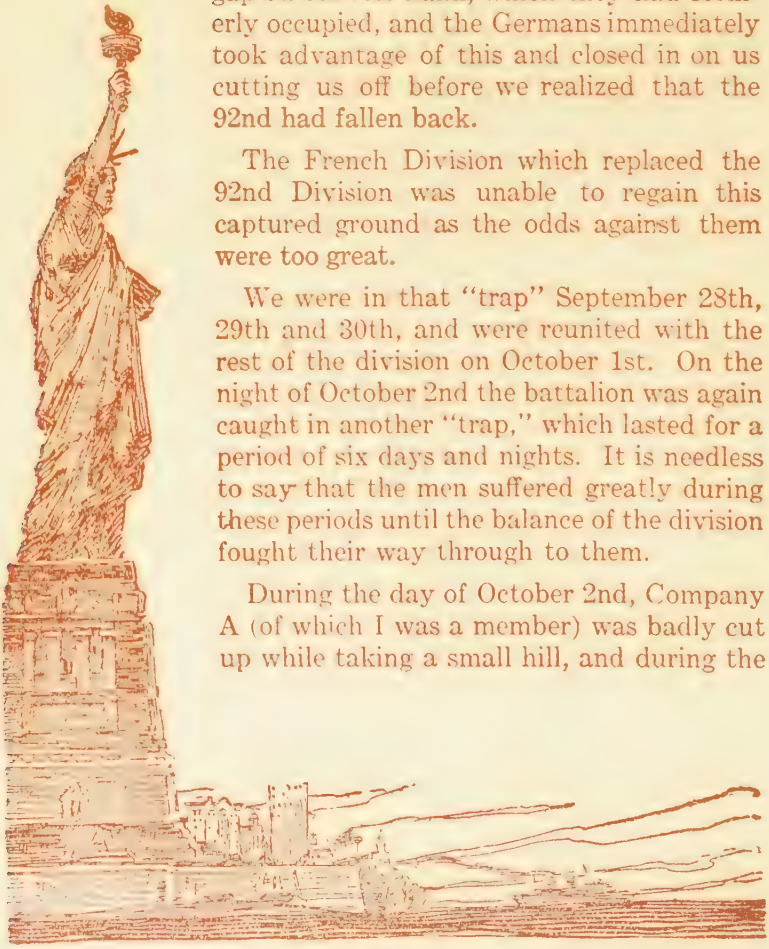


covered by machine guns from protected and well camouflaged points, some even in trees on hilltops, giving them a full sweep as far as they could see. These trails were alive with machine gun and snipers' fire and even after an objective had been taken you would receive their fire from all sides as well as back of you from their concealed "nests." This natural stronghold was strenghtened tenfold by their wonderful line of trenches, and their mammoth dugouts that extended so far into the bowels of the earth that even aerial bombardment could not affect them.

The Germans had taken advantage of all this by interlacing its ravines, mountains and wooded slopes with barbed wire entanglements and small tripwires in such a manner that every inch of that ground was a hell-trap of its own. Every art known to these past masters of "The Art of War" was brought into play to make this one point invulnerable.

The first "trap" or "pocket" in which we were caught came about as the result of the 92nd Division (a negro unit) retiring a distance of from two to three kilometers after





encountering stiff resistance from the Germans on September 28th. This left a large gap on our left flank, which they had formerly occupied, and the Germans immediately took advantage of this and closed in on us cutting us off before we realized that the 92nd had fallen back.

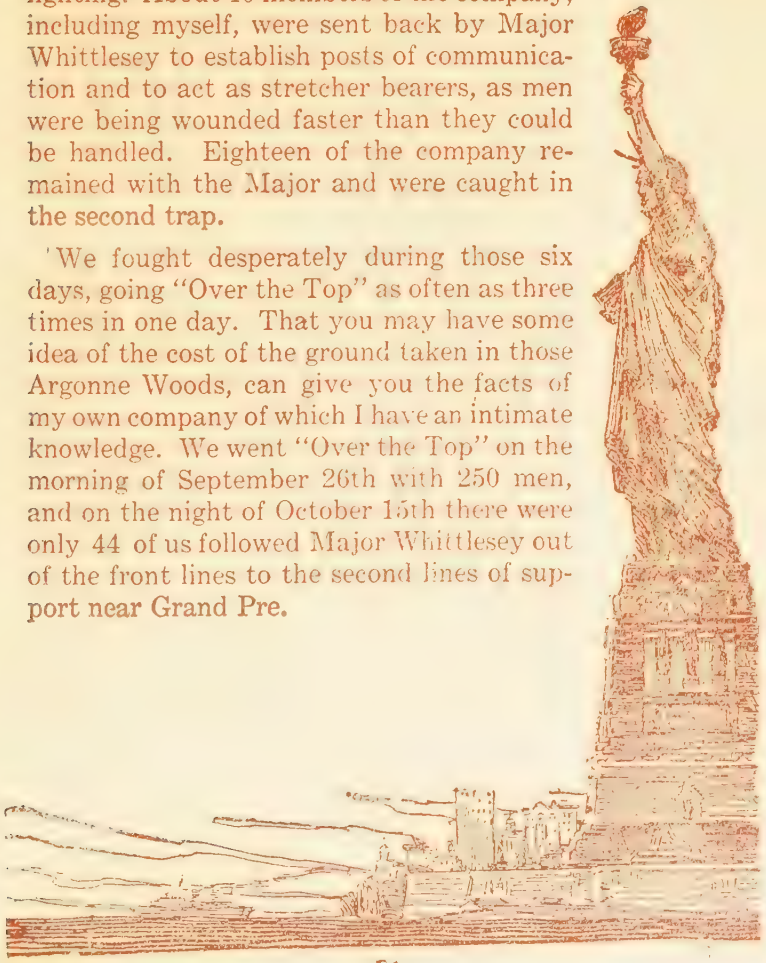
The French Division which replaced the 92nd Division was unable to regain this captured ground as the odds against them were too great.

We were in that "trap" September 28th, 29th and 30th, and were reunited with the rest of the division on October 1st. On the night of October 2nd the battalion was again caught in another "trap," which lasted for a period of six days and nights. It is needless to say that the men suffered greatly during these periods until the balance of the division fought their way through to them.

During the day of October 2nd, Company A (of which I was a member) was badly cut up while taking a small hill, and during the

attack we lost 90 men in less than 30 minutes fighting. About 40 members of the company, including myself, were sent back by Major Whittlesey to establish posts of communication and to act as stretcher bearers, as men were being wounded faster than they could be handled. Eighteen of the company remained with the Major and were caught in the second trap.

We fought desperately during those six days, going "Over the Top" as often as three times in one day. That you may have some idea of the cost of the ground taken in those Argonne Woods, can give you the facts of my own company of which I have an intimate knowledge. We went "Over the Top" on the morning of September 26th with 250 men, and on the night of October 15th there were only 44 of us followed Major Whittlesey out of the front lines to the second lines of support near Grand Pre.

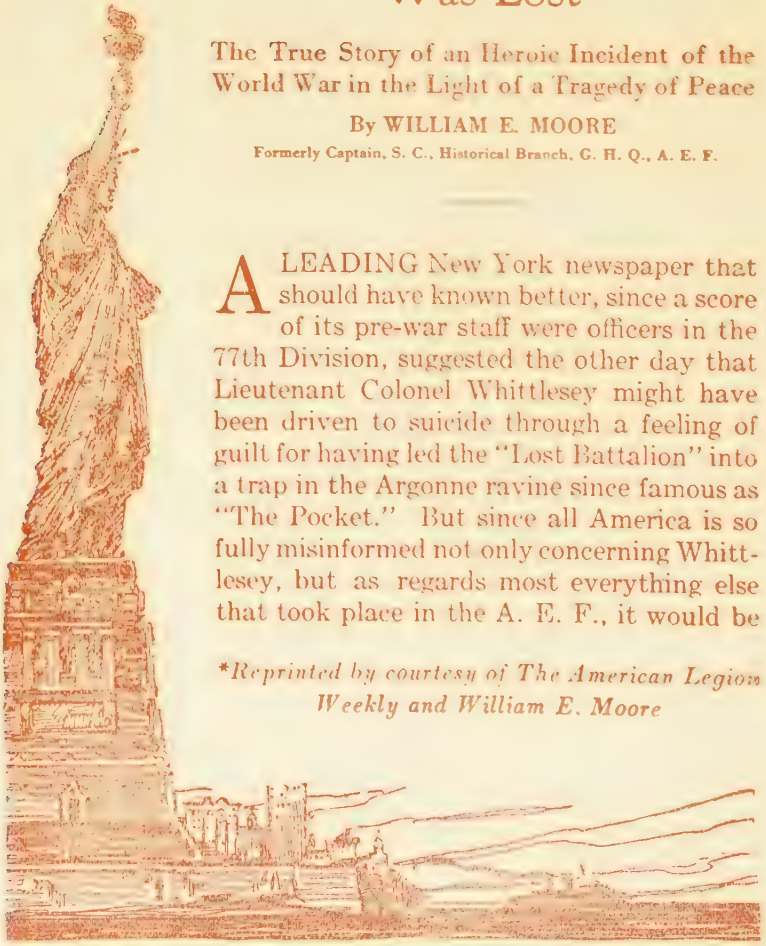


*How The Lost Battalion Was Lost

The True Story of an Heroic Incident of the World War in the Light of a Tragedy of Peace

By WILLIAM E. MOORE

Formerly Captain, S. C., Historical Branch, G. H. Q., A. E. F.



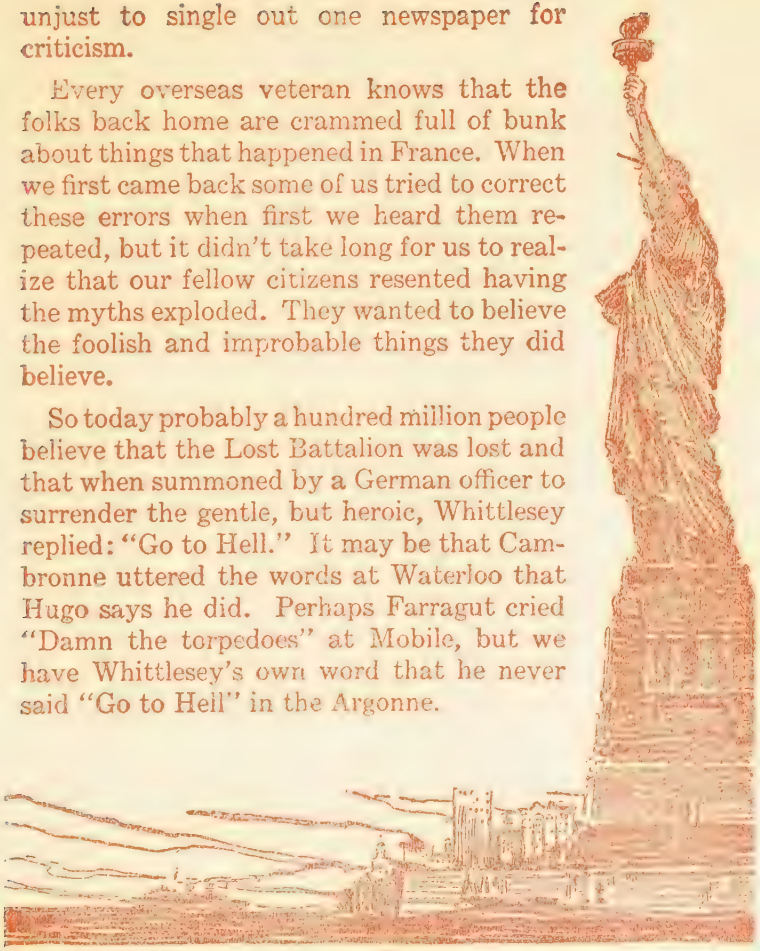
A LEADING New York newspaper that should have known better, since a score of its pre-war staff were officers in the 77th Division, suggested the other day that Lieutenant Colonel Whittlesey might have been driven to suicide through a feeling of guilt for having led the "Lost Battalion" into a trap in the Argonne ravine since famous as "The Pocket." But since all America is so fully misinformed not only concerning Whittlesey, but as regards most everything else that took place in the A. E. F., it would be

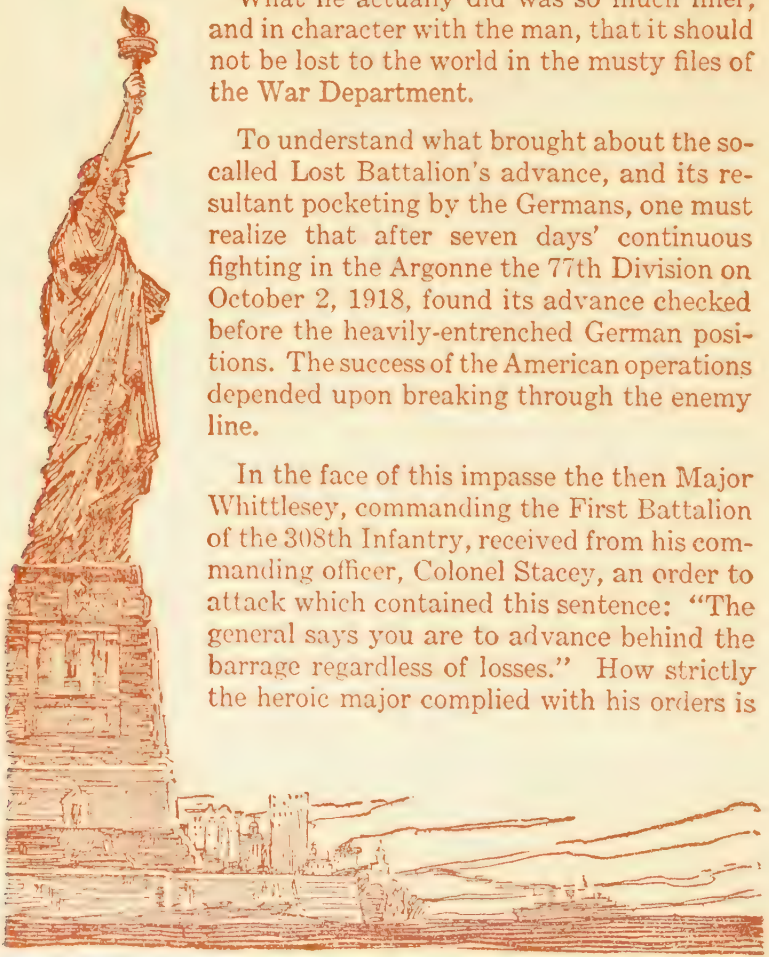
**Reprinted by courtesy of The American Legion Weekly and William E. Moore*

unjust to single out one newspaper for criticism.

Every overseas veteran knows that the folks back home are crammed full of bunk about things that happened in France. When we first came back some of us tried to correct these errors when first we heard them repeated, but it didn't take long for us to realize that our fellow citizens resented having the myths exploded. They wanted to believe the foolish and improbable things they did believe.

So today probably a hundred million people believe that the Lost Battalion was lost and that when summoned by a German officer to surrender the gentle, but heroic, Whittlesey replied: "Go to Hell." It may be that Cambronne uttered the words at Waterloo that Hugo says he did. Perhaps Farragut cried "Damn the torpedoes" at Mobile, but we have Whittlesey's own word that he never said "Go to Hell" in the Argonne.





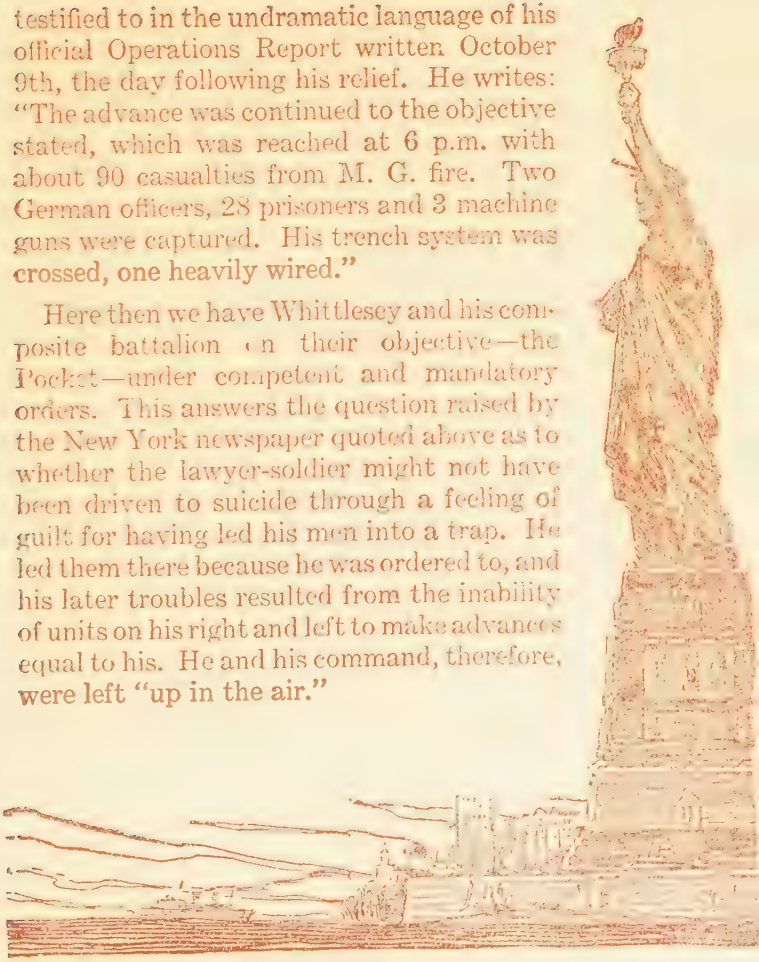
What he actually did was so much finer, and in character with the man, that it should not be lost to the world in the musty files of the War Department.

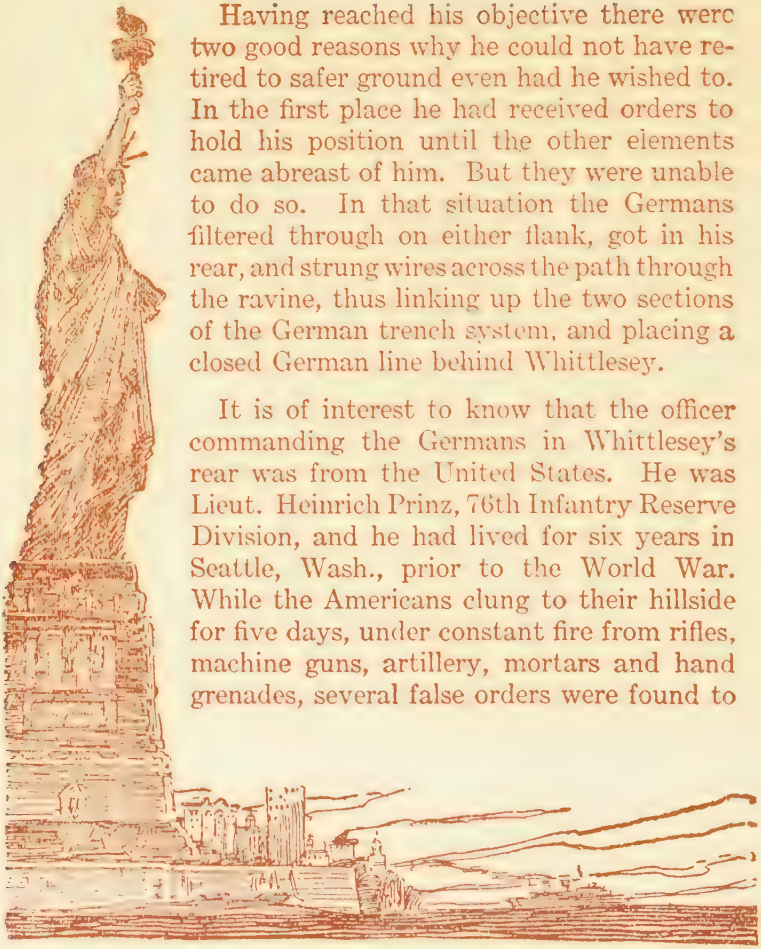
To understand what brought about the so-called Lost Battalion's advance, and its resultant pocketing by the Germans, one must realize that after seven days' continuous fighting in the Argonne the 77th Division on October 2, 1918, found its advance checked before the heavily-entrenched German positions. The success of the American operations depended upon breaking through the enemy line.

In the face of this impasse the then Major Whittlesey, commanding the First Battalion of the 308th Infantry, received from his commanding officer, Colonel Stacey, an order to attack which contained this sentence: "The general says you are to advance behind the barrage regardless of losses." How strictly the heroic major complied with his orders is

testified to in the undramatic language of his official Operations Report written October 9th, the day following his relief. He writes: "The advance was continued to the objective stated, which was reached at 6 p.m. with about 90 casualties from M. G. fire. Two German officers, 28 prisoners and 3 machine guns were captured. His trench system was crossed, one heavily wired."

Here then we have Whittlesey and his composite battalion on their objective—the Pocket—under competent and mandatory orders. This answers the question raised by the New York newspaper quoted above as to whether the lawyer-soldier might not have been driven to suicide through a feeling of guilt for having led his men into a trap. He led them there because he was ordered to, and his later troubles resulted from the inability of units on his right and left to make advances equal to his. He and his command, therefore, were left "up in the air."





Having reached his objective there were two good reasons why he could not have retired to safer ground even had he wished to. In the first place he had received orders to hold his position until the other elements came abreast of him. But they were unable to do so. In that situation the Germans filtered through on either flank, got in his rear, and strung wires across the path through the ravine, thus linking up the two sections of the German trench system, and placing a closed German line behind Whittlesey.

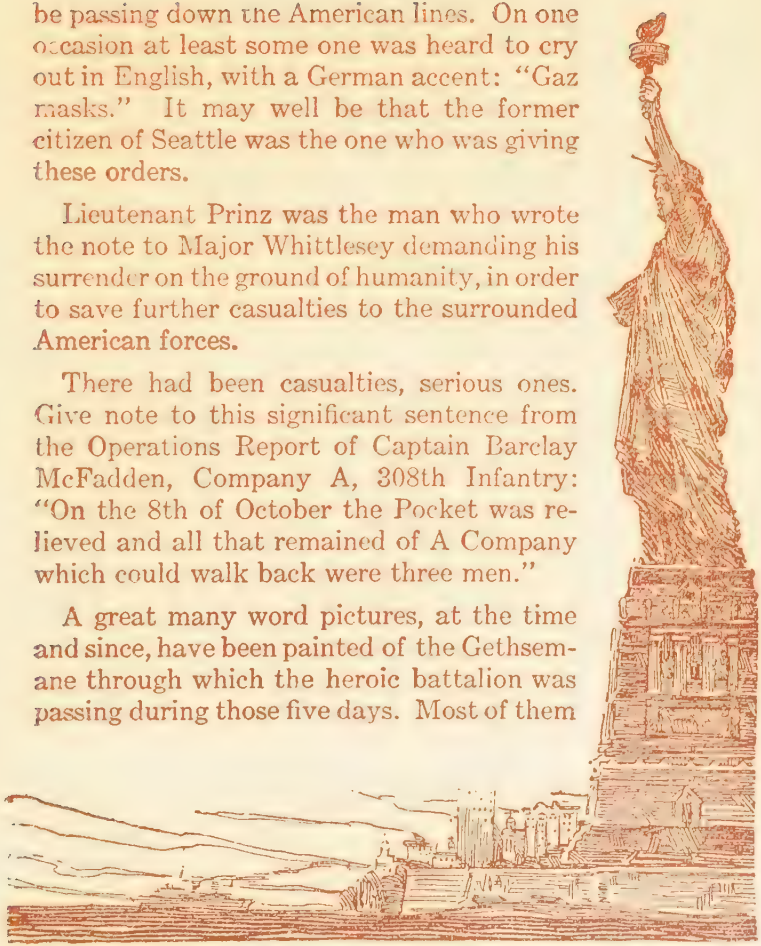
It is of interest to know that the officer commanding the Germans in Whittlesey's rear was from the United States. He was Lieut. Heinrich Prinz, 76th Infantry Reserve Division, and he had lived for six years in Seattle, Wash., prior to the World War. While the Americans clung to their hillside for five days, under constant fire from rifles, machine guns, artillery, mortars and hand grenades, several false orders were found to

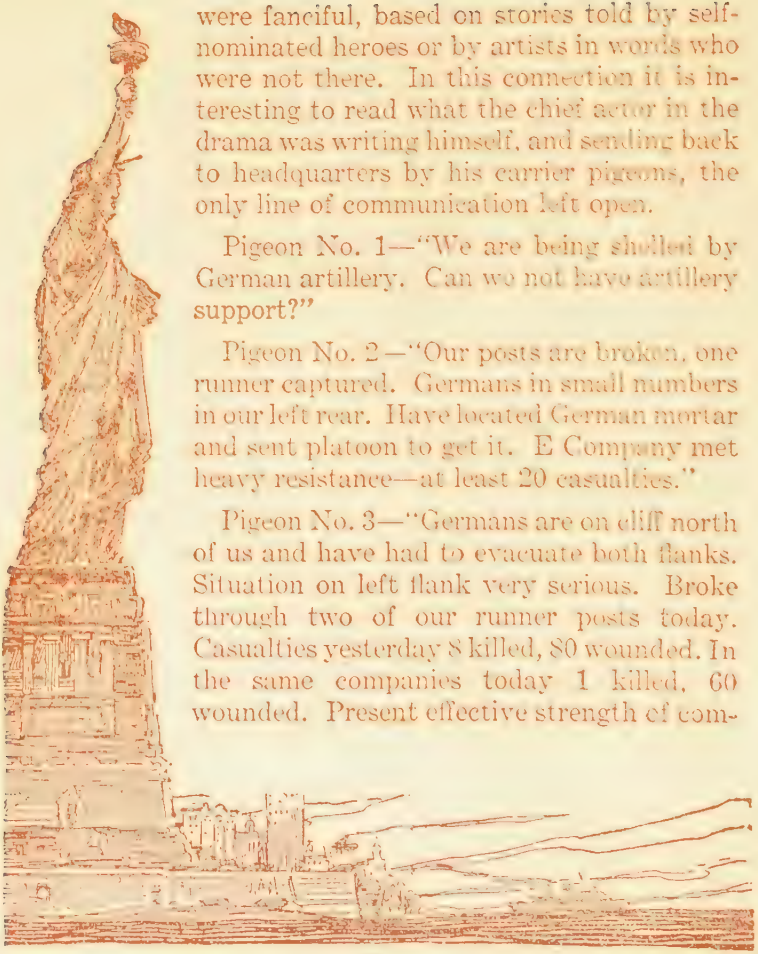
be passing down the American lines. On one occasion at least some one was heard to cry out in English, with a German accent: "Gaz masks." It may well be that the former citizen of Seattle was the one who was giving these orders.

Lieutenant Prinz was the man who wrote the note to Major Whittlesey demanding his surrender on the ground of humanity, in order to save further casualties to the surrounded American forces.

There had been casualties, serious ones. Give note to this significant sentence from the Operations Report of Captain Barclay McFadden, Company A, 308th Infantry: "On the 8th of October the Pocket was relieved and all that remained of A Company which could walk back were three men."

A great many word pictures, at the time and since, have been painted of the Gethsemane through which the heroic battalion was passing during those five days. Most of them





were fanciful, based on stories told by self-nominated heroes or by artists in words who were not there. In this connection it is interesting to read what the chief actor in the drama was writing himself, and sending back to headquarters by his carrier pigeons, the only line of communication left open.

Pigeon No. 1—"We are being shelled by German artillery. Can we not have artillery support?"

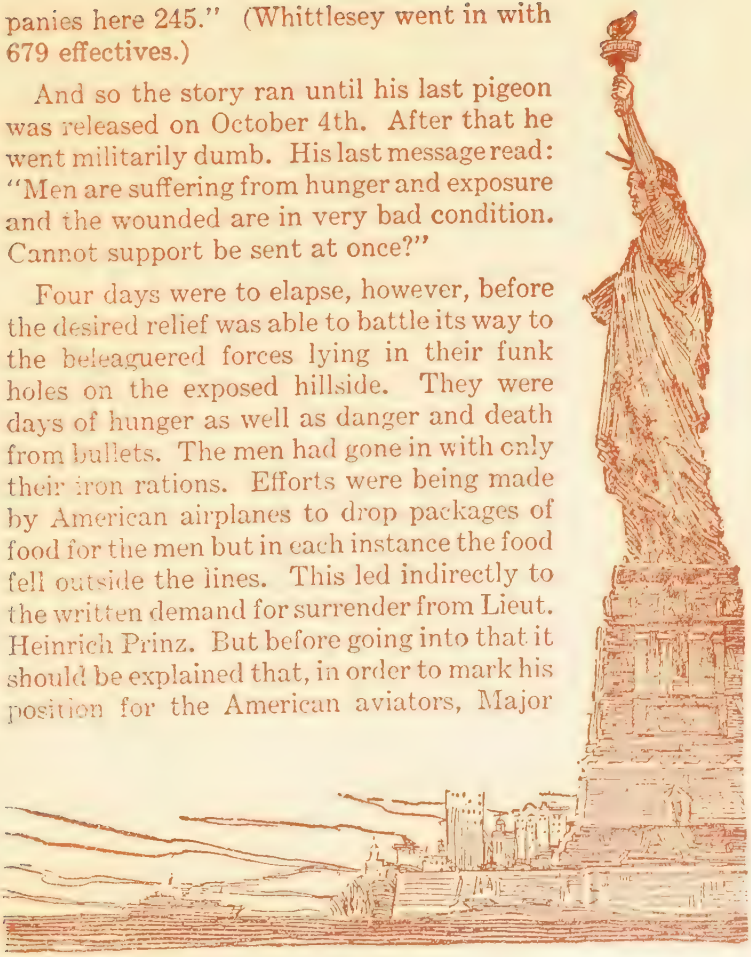
Pigeon No. 2—"Our posts are broken, one runner captured. Germans in small numbers in our left rear. Have located German mortar and sent platoon to get it. E Company met heavy resistance—at least 20 casualties."

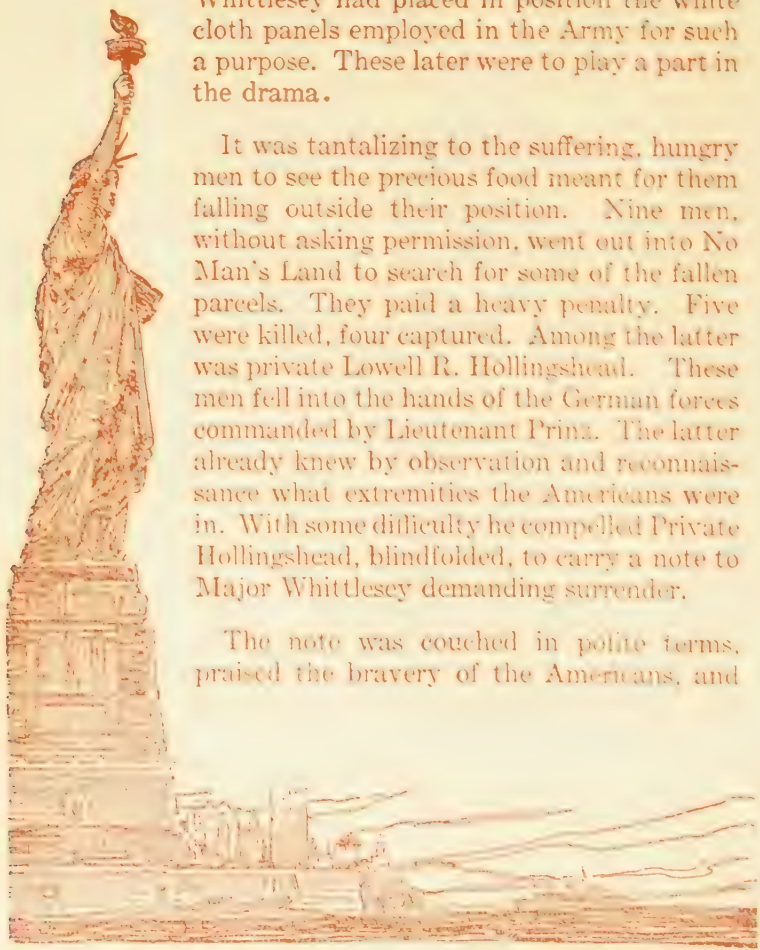
Pigeon No. 3—"Germans are on cliff north of us and have had to evacuate both flanks. Situation on left flank very serious. Broke through two of our runner posts today. Casualties yesterday 8 killed, 80 wounded. In the same companies today 1 killed, 60 wounded. Present effective strength of com-

panies here 245." (Whittlesey went in with 679 effectives.)

And so the story ran until his last pigeon was released on October 4th. After that he went militarily dumb. His last message read: "Men are suffering from hunger and exposure and the wounded are in very bad condition. Cannot support be sent at once?"

Four days were to elapse, however, before the desired relief was able to battle its way to the beleaguered forces lying in their funk holes on the exposed hillside. They were days of hunger as well as danger and death from bullets. The men had gone in with only their iron rations. Efforts were being made by American airplanes to drop packages of food for the men but in each instance the food fell outside the lines. This led indirectly to the written demand for surrender from Lieut. Heinrich Prinz. But before going into that it should be explained that, in order to mark his position for the American aviators, Major





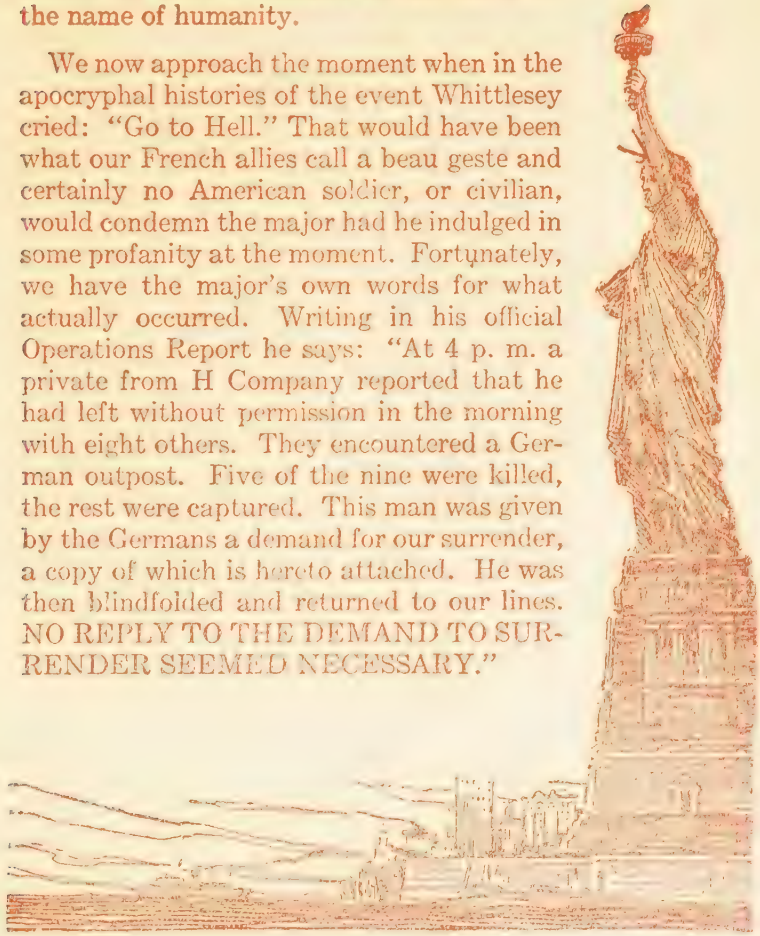
Whittlesey had placed in position the white cloth panels employed in the Army for such a purpose. These later were to play a part in the drama.

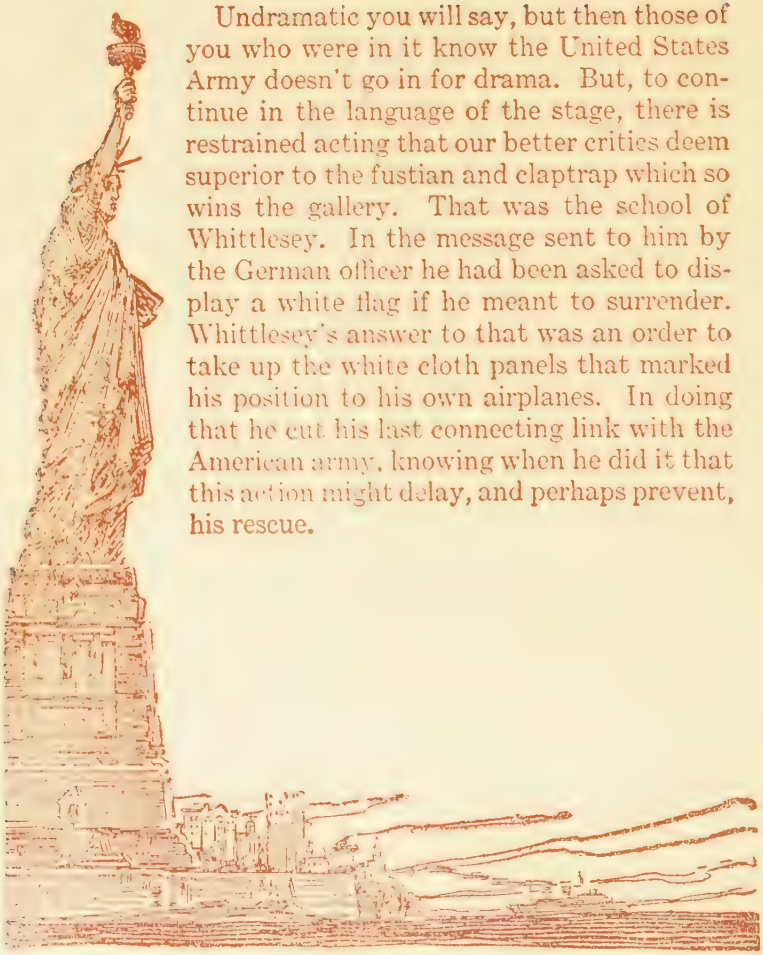
It was tantalizing to the suffering, hungry men to see the precious food meant for them falling outside their position. Nine men, without asking permission, went out into No Man's Land to search for some of the fallen parcels. They paid a heavy penalty. Five were killed, four captured. Among the latter was private Lowell R. Hollingshead. These men fell into the hands of the German forces commanded by Lieutenant Prinz. The latter already knew by observation and reconnaissance what extremities the Americans were in. With some difficulty he compelled Private Hollingshead, blindfolded, to carry a note to Major Whittlesey demanding surrender.

The note was couched in polite terms, praised the bravery of the Americans, and

wound up with a demand for surrender in the name of humanity.

We now approach the moment when in the apocryphal histories of the event Whittlesey cried: "Go to Hell." That would have been what our French allies call a beau geste and certainly no American soldier, or civilian, would condemn the major had he indulged in some profanity at the moment. Fortunately, we have the major's own words for what actually occurred. Writing in his official Operations Report he says: "At 4 p. m. a private from H Company reported that he had left without permission in the morning with eight others. They encountered a German outpost. Five of the nine were killed, the rest were captured. This man was given by the Germans a demand for our surrender, a copy of which is hereto attached. He was then blindfolded and returned to our lines. NO REPLY TO THE DEMAND TO SURRENDER SEEMED NECESSARY."





Undramatic you will say, but then those of you who were in it know the United States Army doesn't go in for drama. But, to continue in the language of the stage, there is restrained acting that our better critics deem superior to the fustian and claptrap which so wins the gallery. That was the school of Whittlesey. In the message sent to him by the German officer he had been asked to display a white flag if he meant to surrender. Whittlesey's answer to that was an order to take up the white cloth panels that marked his position to his own airplanes. In doing that he cut his last connecting link with the American army, knowing when he did it that this action might delay, and perhaps prevent, his rescue.

The Demand for Surrender

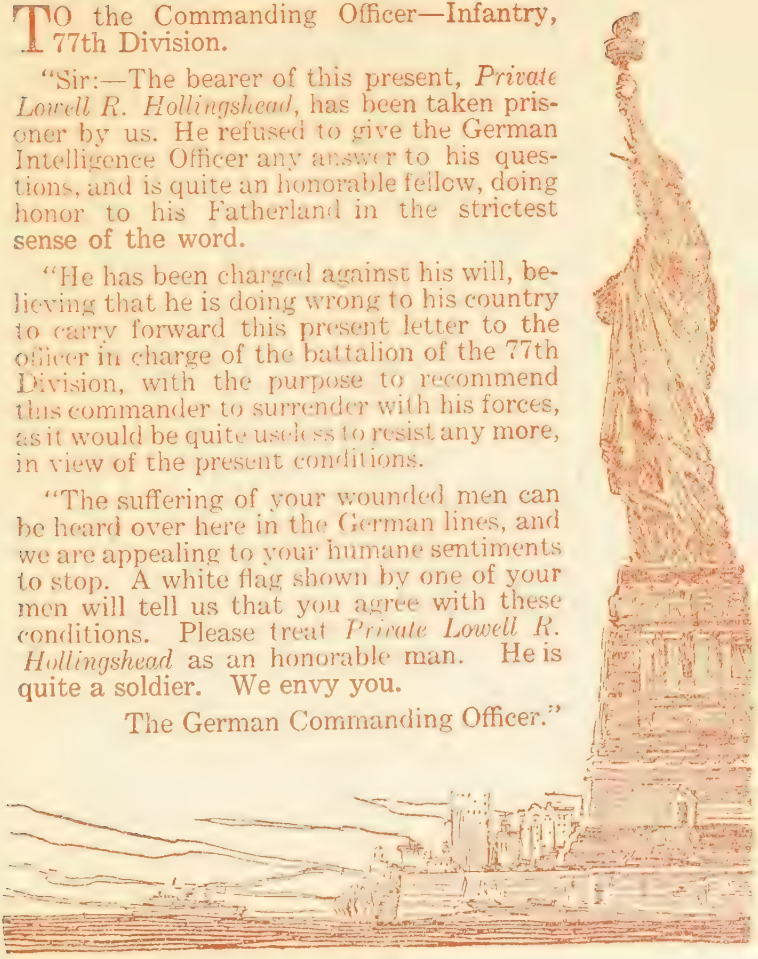
TO the Commanding Officer—Infantry, 77th Division.

"Sir:—The bearer of this present, *Private Lowell R. Hollingshead*, has been taken prisoner by us. He refused to give the German Intelligence Officer any answer to his questions, and is quite an honorable fellow, doing honor to his Fatherland in the strictest sense of the word.

"He has been charged against his will, believing that he is doing wrong to his country to carry forward this present letter to the officer in charge of the battalion of the 77th Division, with the purpose to recommend this commander to surrender with his forces, as it would be quite useless to resist any more, in view of the present conditions.

"The suffering of your wounded men can be heard over here in the German lines, and we are appealing to your humane sentiments to stop. A white flag shown by one of your men will tell us that you agree with these conditions. Please treat *Private Lowell R. Hollingshead* as an honorable man. He is quite a soldier. We envy you.

The German Commanding Officer."



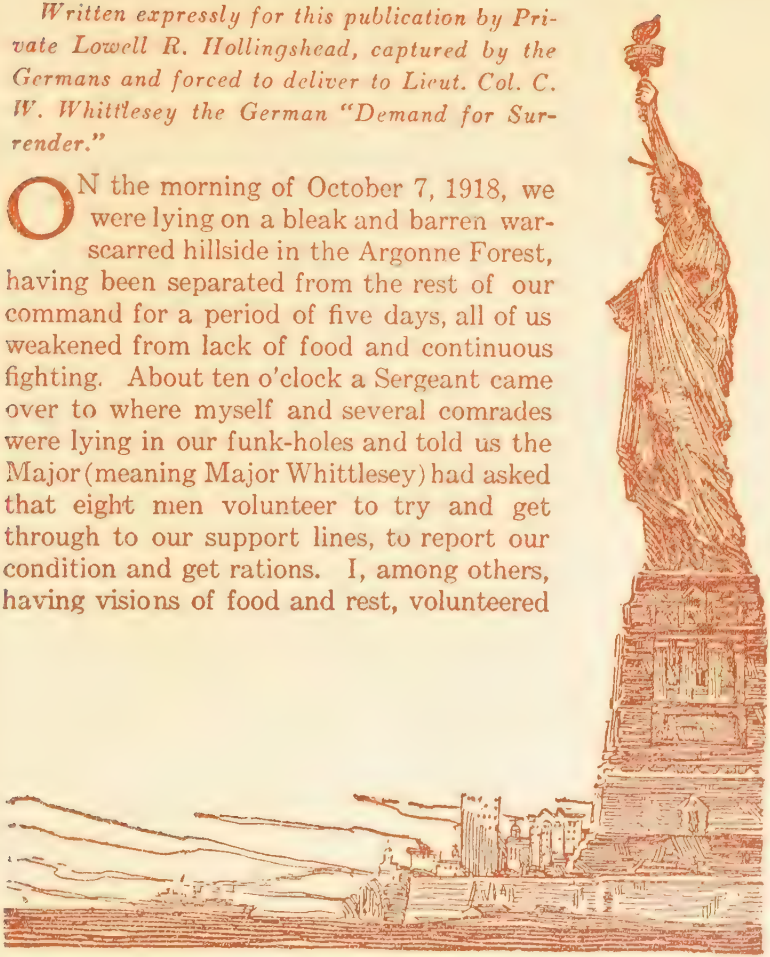
PRIVATE LOWELL R. HOLLINGSHEAD

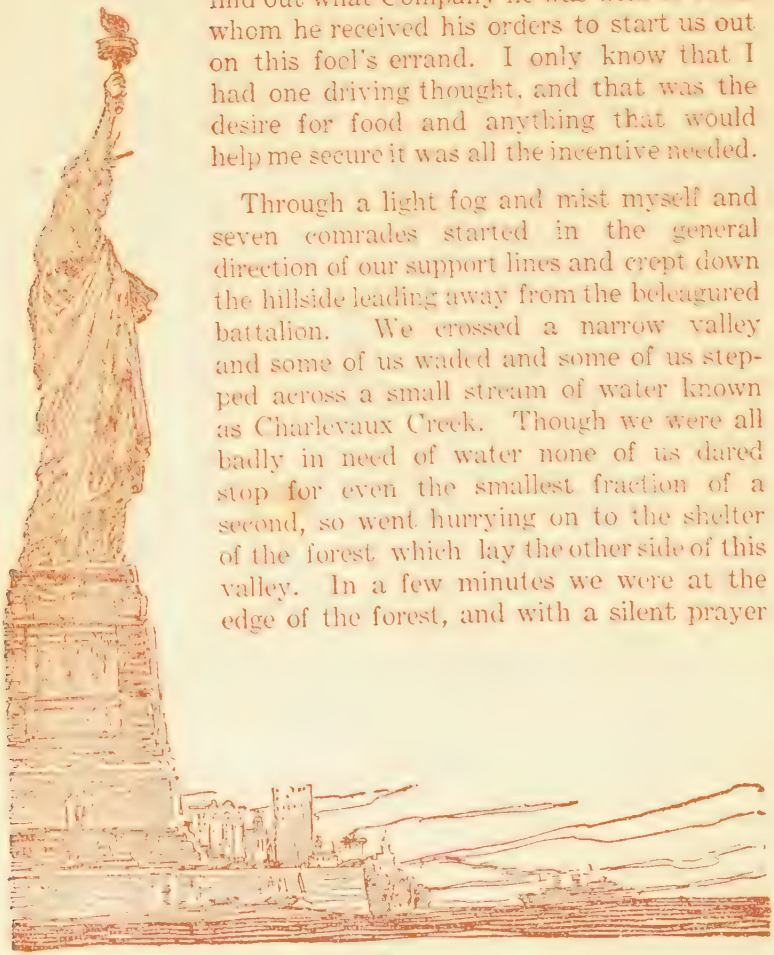
Captured eighteen-year-old American Soldier, who delivered to Lieut. Col. Chas. W. Whittlesey the famous "Demand for Surrender"

Private Hollingshead's Experience

Written expressly for this publication by Private Lowell R. Hollingshead, captured by the Germans and forced to deliver to Lieut. Col. C. W. Whittlesey the German "Demand for Surrender."

ON the morning of October 7, 1918, we were lying on a bleak and barren war-scarred hillside in the Argonne Forest, having been separated from the rest of our command for a period of five days, all of us weakened from lack of food and continuous fighting. About ten o'clock a Sergeant came over to where myself and several comrades were lying in our funk-holes and told us the Major (meaning Major Whittlesey) had asked that eight men volunteer to try and get through to our support lines, to report our condition and get rations. I, among others, having visions of food and rest, volunteered



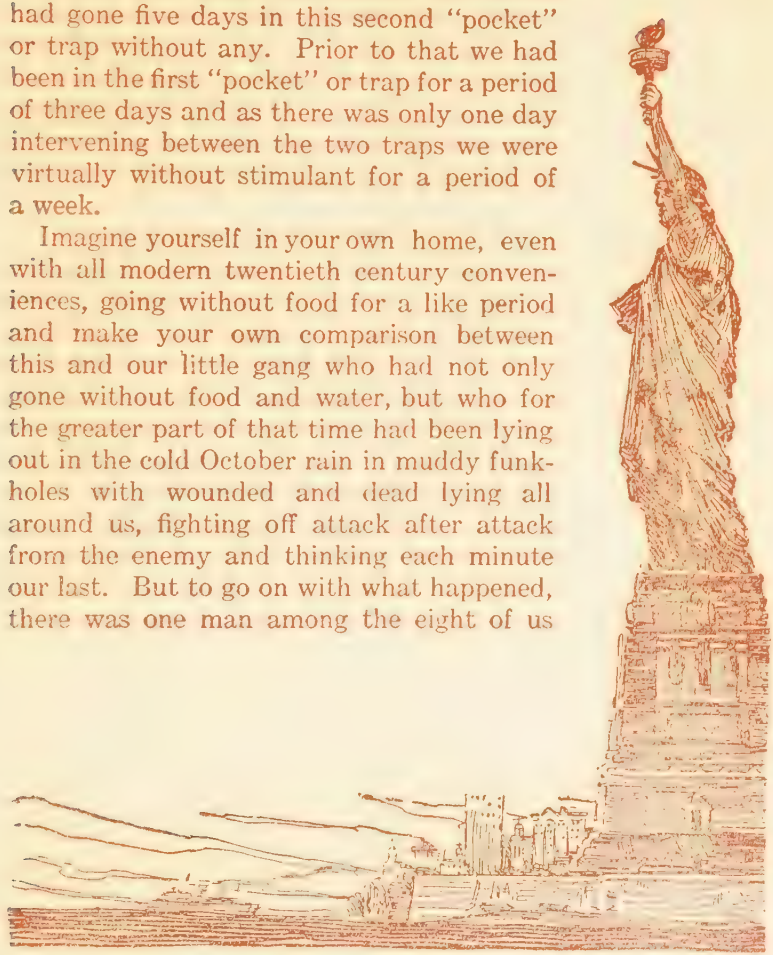


to go. I did not at the time know the Sergeant's name nor have I ever been able to find out what Company he was with or from whom he received his orders to start us out on this fool's errand. I only know that I had one driving thought, and that was the desire for food and anything that would help me secure it was all the incentive needed.

Through a light fog and mist myself and seven comrades started in the general direction of our support lines and crept down the hillside leading away from the beleagured battalion. We crossed a narrow valley and some of us waded and some of us stepped across a small stream of water known as Charlevaux Creek. Though we were all badly in need of water none of us dared stop for even the smallest fraction of a second, so went hurrying on to the shelter of the forest which lay the other side of this valley. In a few minutes we were at the edge of the forest, and with a silent prayer

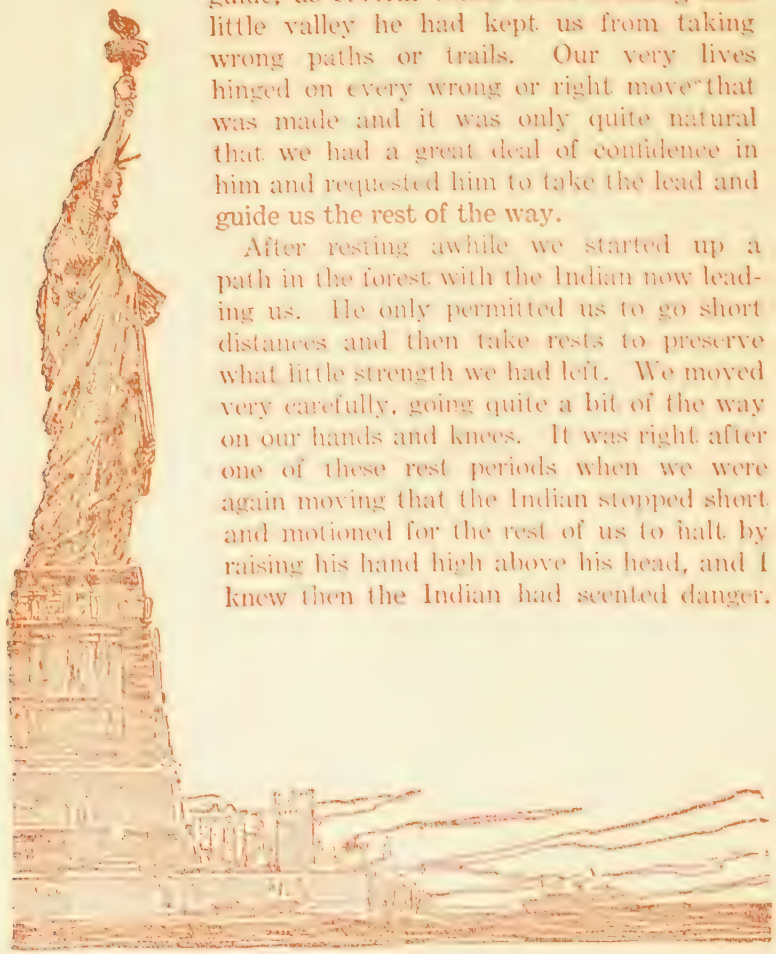
of thanks all huddled down for a brief rest. We were very weak from lack of food as we had gone five days in this second "pocket" or trap without any. Prior to that we had been in the first "pocket" or trap for a period of three days and as there was only one day intervening between the two traps we were virtually without stimulant for a period of a week.

Imagine yourself in your own home, even with all modern twentieth century conveniences, going without food for a like period and make your own comparison between this and our little gang who had not only gone without food and water, but who for the greater part of that time had been lying out in the cold October rain in muddy funkholes with wounded and dead lying all around us, fighting off attack after attack from the enemy and thinking each minute our last. But to go on with what happened, there was one man among the eight of us



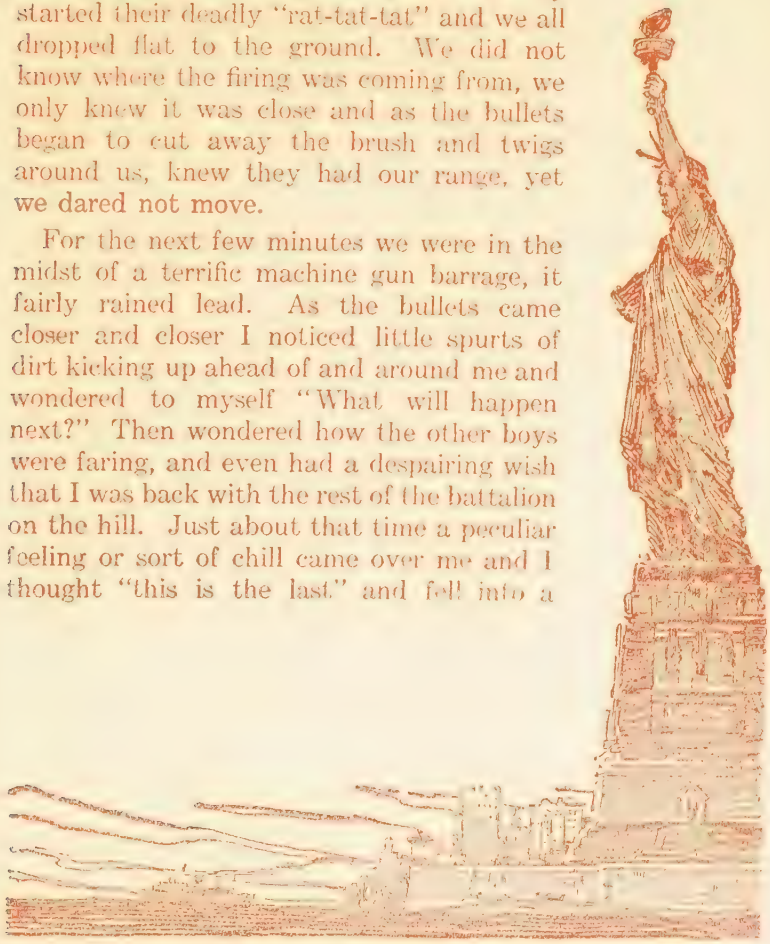
who was a full-blooded Indian from Montana and we delegated him as our leader and guide, as several times while crossing that little valley he had kept us from taking wrong paths or trails. Our very lives hinged on every wrong or right move that was made and it was only quite natural that we had a great deal of confidence in him and requested him to take the lead and guide us the rest of the way.

After resting awhile we started up a path in the forest with the Indian now leading us. He only permitted us to go short distances and then take rests to preserve what little strength we had left. We moved very carefully, going quite a bit of the way on our hands and knees. It was right after one of these rest periods when we were again moving that the Indian stopped short and motioned for the rest of us to halt by raising his hand high above his head, and I knew then the Indian had scented danger.



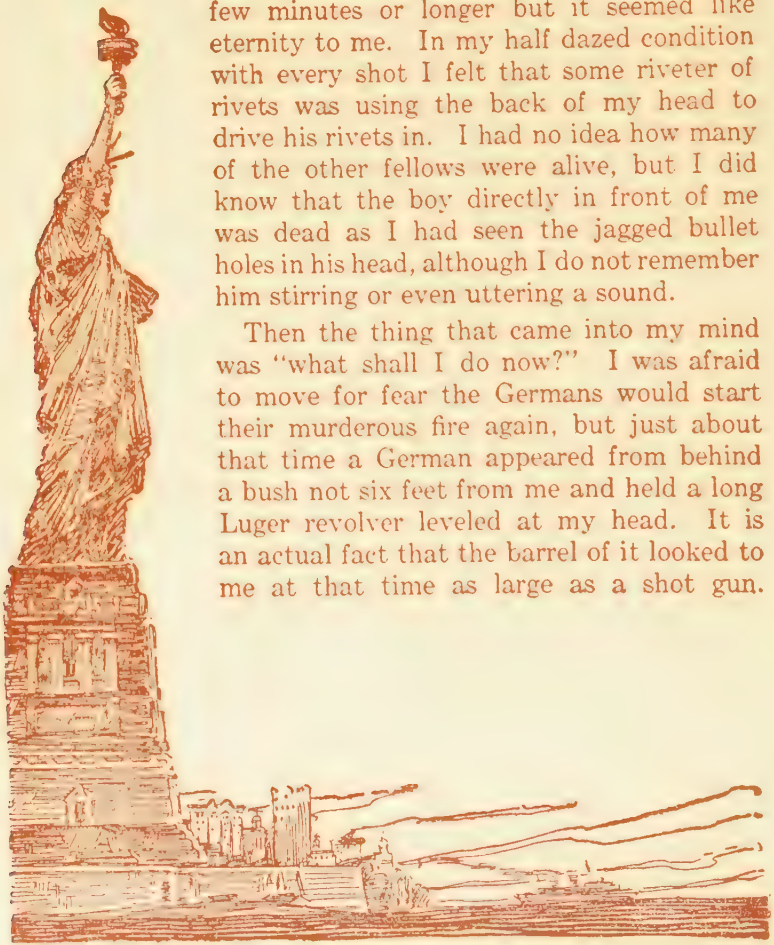
We stopped dead in our tracks and in a silence so dense you could hear your own heart beat, the machine guns suddenly started their deadly "rat-tat-tat" and we all dropped flat to the ground. We did not know where the firing was coming from, we only knew it was close and as the bullets began to cut away the brush and twigs around us, knew they had our range, yet we dared not move.

For the next few minutes we were in the midst of a terrific machine gun barrage, it fairly rained lead. As the bullets came closer and closer I noticed little spurts of dirt kicking up ahead of and around me and wondered to myself "What will happen next?" Then wondered how the other boys were faring, and even had a despairing wish that I was back with the rest of the battalion on the hill. Just about that time a peculiar feeling or sort of chill came over me and I thought "this is the last" and fell into a

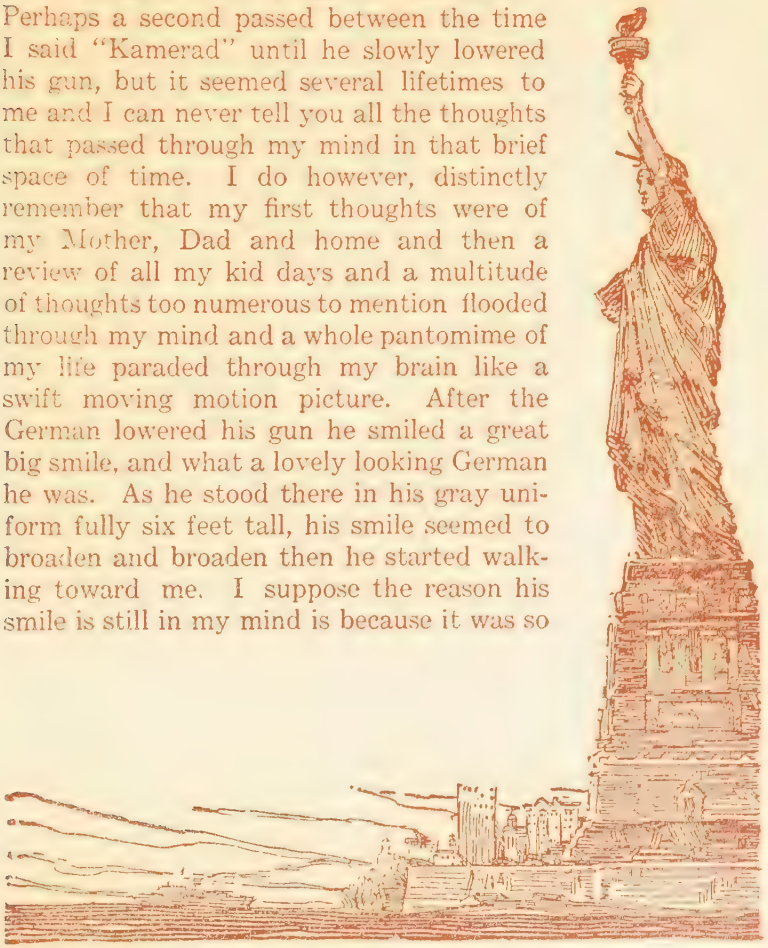


sort of coma or daze. I have no idea how long that deadly "rat-tat-tat" of the machine guns kept up, it may have been for only a few minutes or longer but it seemed like eternity to me. In my half dazed condition with every shot I felt that some riveter of rivets was using the back of my head to drive his rivets in. I had no idea how many of the other fellows were alive, but I did know that the boy directly in front of me was dead as I had seen the jagged bullet holes in his head, although I do not remember him stirring or even uttering a sound.

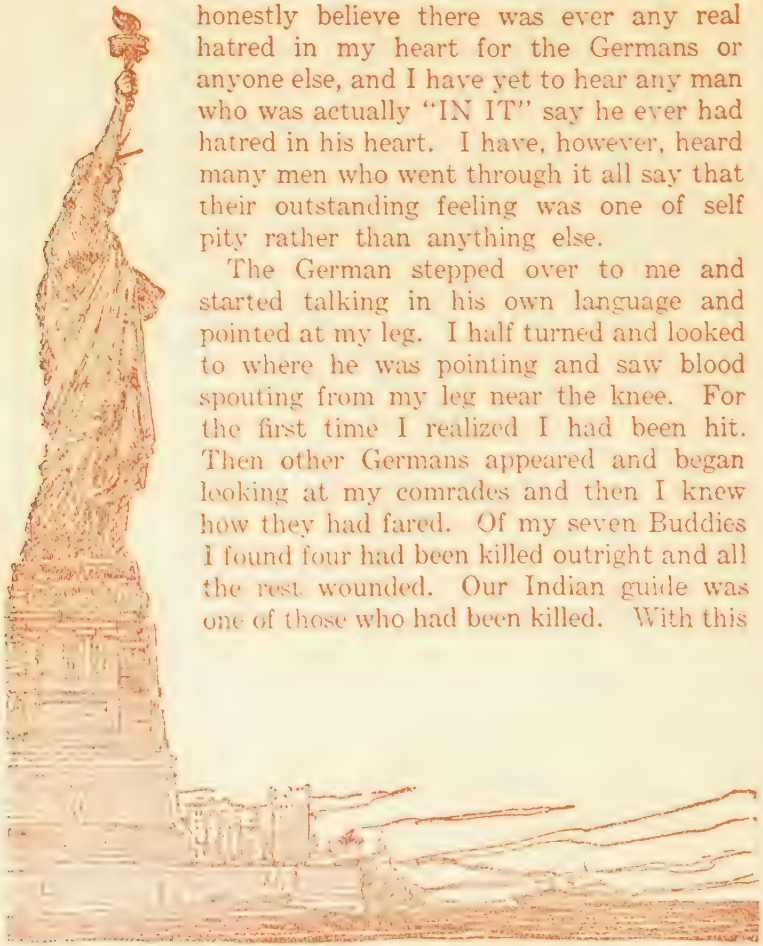
Then the thing that came into my mind was "what shall I do now?" I was afraid to move for fear the Germans would start their murderous fire again, but just about that time a German appeared from behind a bush not six feet from me and held a long Luger revolver leveled at my head. It is an actual fact that the barrel of it looked to me at that time as large as a shot gun.



The German half smiled, half sneered and I instinctively raised my hands and said the only German word I knew, "Kamerad." Perhaps a second passed between the time I said "Kamerad" until he slowly lowered his gun, but it seemed several lifetimes to me and I can never tell you all the thoughts that passed through my mind in that brief space of time. I do however, distinctly remember that my first thoughts were of my Mother, Dad and home and then a review of all my kid days and a multitude of thoughts too numerous to mention flooded through my mind and a whole pantomime of my life paraded through my brain like a swift moving motion picture. After the German lowered his gun he smiled a great big smile, and what a lovely looking German he was. As he stood there in his gray uniform fully six feet tall, his smile seemed to broaden and broaden then he started walking toward me. I suppose the reason his smile is still in my mind is because it was so



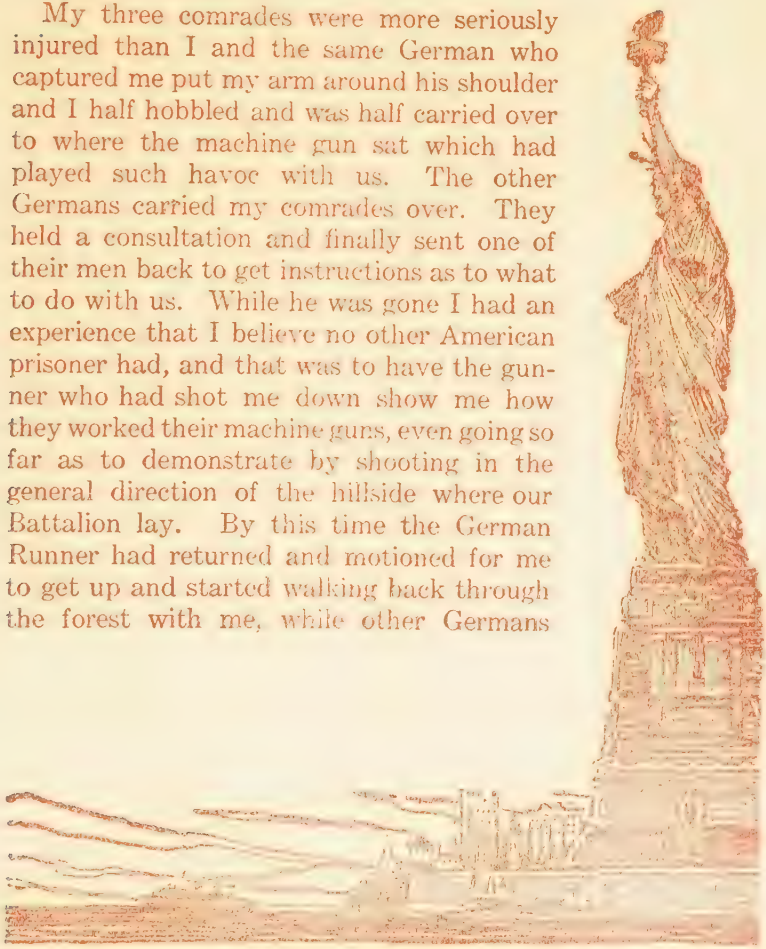
unexpected, as I had been taught to hate and expect fearful things from the Germans should they ever capture me. I do not honestly believe there was ever any real hatred in my heart for the Germans or anyone else, and I have yet to hear any man who was actually "IN IT" say he ever had hatred in his heart. I have, however, heard many men who went through it all say that their outstanding feeling was one of self pity rather than anything else.

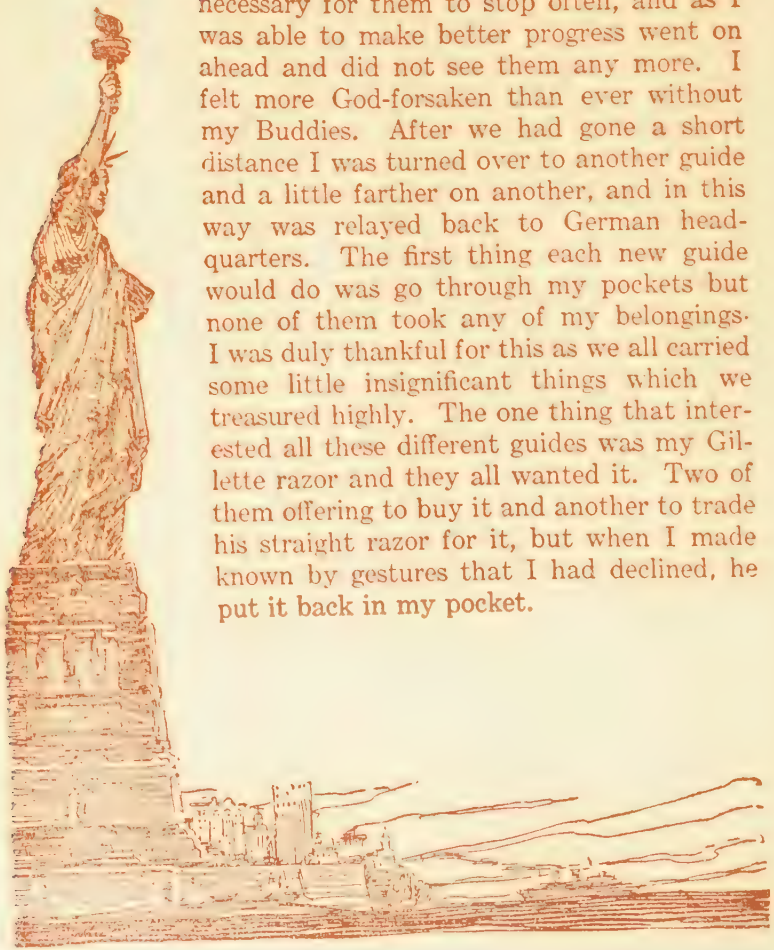


The German stepped over to me and started talking in his own language and pointed at my leg. I half turned and looked to where he was pointing and saw blood spouting from my leg near the knee. For the first time I realized I had been hit. Then other Germans appeared and began looking at my comrades and then I knew how they had fared. Of my seven Buddies I found four had been killed outright and all the rest wounded. Our Indian guide was one of those who had been killed. With this

realization a sickening sensation came over me and I thought to myself "this is not real, it is just a dream."

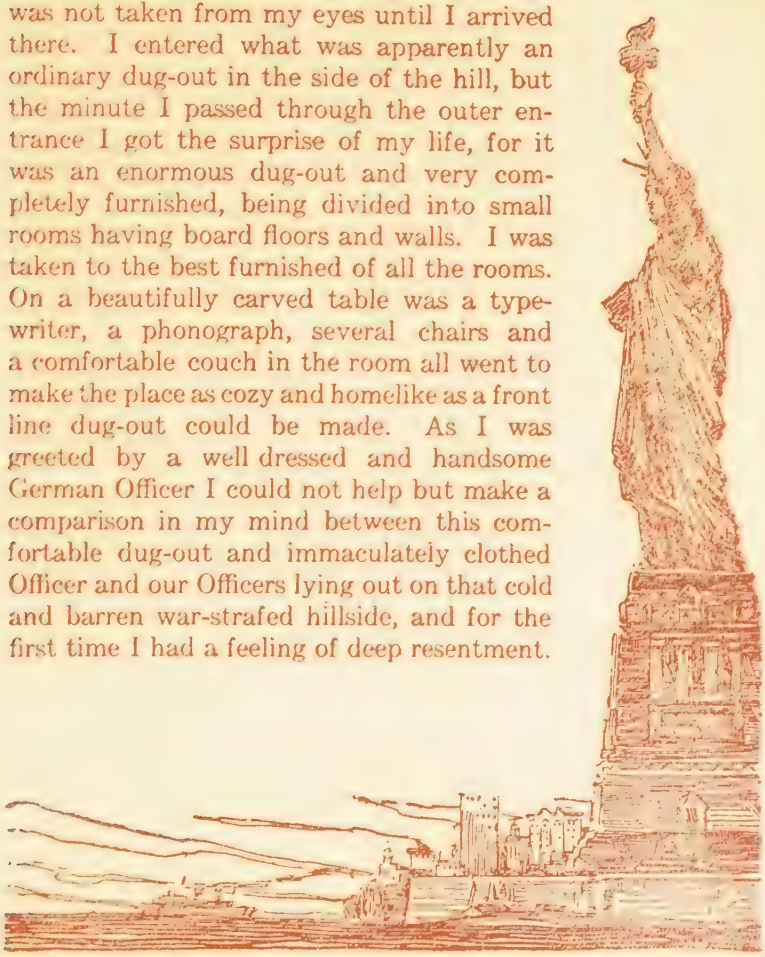
My three comrades were more seriously injured than I and the same German who captured me put my arm around his shoulder and I half hobbled and was half carried over to where the machine gun sat which had played such havoc with us. The other Germans carried my comrades over. They held a consultation and finally sent one of their men back to get instructions as to what to do with us. While he was gone I had an experience that I believe no other American prisoner had, and that was to have the gunner who had shot me down show me how they worked their machine guns, even going so far as to demonstrate by shooting in the general direction of the hillside where our Battalion lay. By this time the German Runner had returned and motioned for me to get up and started walking back through the forest with me, while other Germans





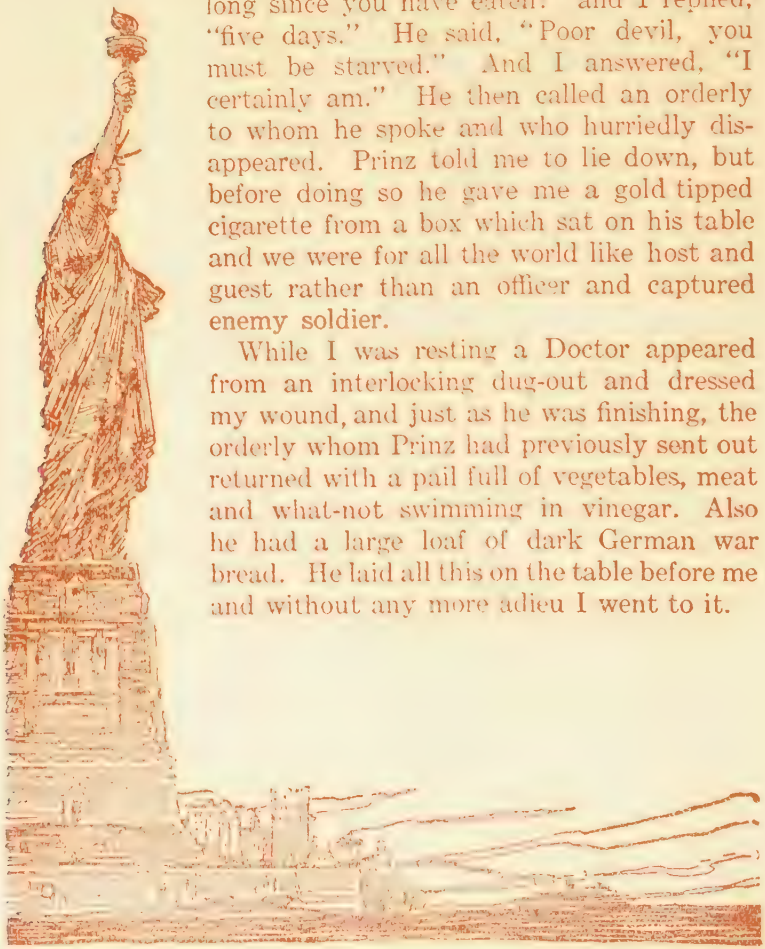
carried my three comrades on improvised stretchers. Having to be carried it was necessary for them to stop often, and as I was able to make better progress went on ahead and did not see them any more. I felt more God-forsaken than ever without my Buddies. After we had gone a short distance I was turned over to another guide and a little farther on another, and in this way was relayed back to German headquarters. The first thing each new guide would do was go through my pockets but none of them took any of my belongings. I was duly thankful for this as we all carried some little insignificant things which we treasured highly. The one thing that interested all these different guides was my Gillette razor and they all wanted it. Two of them offering to buy it and another to trade his straight razor for it, but when I made known by gestures that I had declined, he put it back in my pocket.

Quite a distance from German Headquarters I was blindfolded and the bandage was not taken from my eyes until I arrived there. I entered what was apparently an ordinary dug-out in the side of the hill, but the minute I passed through the outer entrance I got the surprise of my life, for it was an enormous dug-out and very completely furnished, being divided into small rooms having board floors and walls. I was taken to the best furnished of all the rooms. On a beautifully carved table was a typewriter, a phonograph, several chairs and a comfortable couch in the room all went to make the place as cozy and homelike as a front line dug-out could be made. As I was greeted by a well dressed and handsome German Officer I could not help but make a comparison in my mind between this comfortable dug-out and immaculately clothed Officer and our Officers lying out on that cold and barren war-strafed hillside, and for the first time I had a feeling of deep resentment.



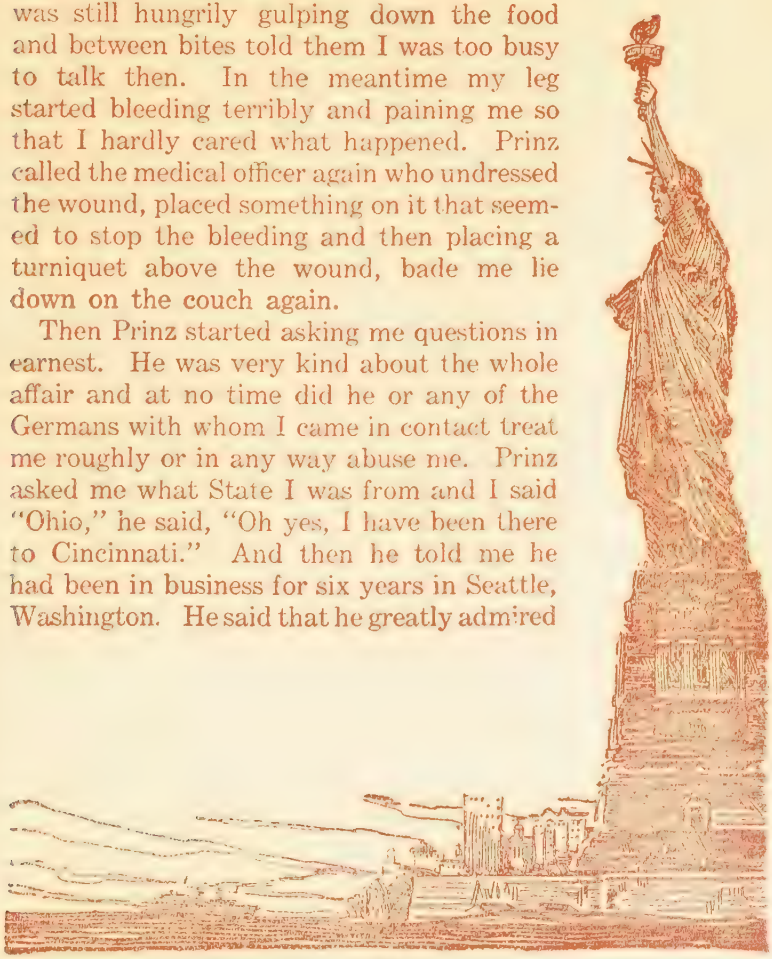
This Officer turned out to be Lieutenant Heinrich Prinz and addressing me in perfect English, his first question was, "How long since you have eaten?" and I replied, "five days." He said, "Poor devil, you must be starved." And I answered, "I certainly am." He then called an orderly to whom he spoke and who hurriedly disappeared. Prinz told me to lie down, but before doing so he gave me a gold tipped cigarette from a box which sat on his table and we were for all the world like host and guest rather than an officer and captured enemy soldier.

While I was resting a Doctor appeared from an interlocking dug-out and dressed my wound, and just as he was finishing, the orderly whom Prinz had previously sent out returned with a pail full of vegetables, meat and what-not swimming in vinegar. Also he had a large loaf of dark German war bread. He laid all this on the table before me and without any more adieu I went to it.



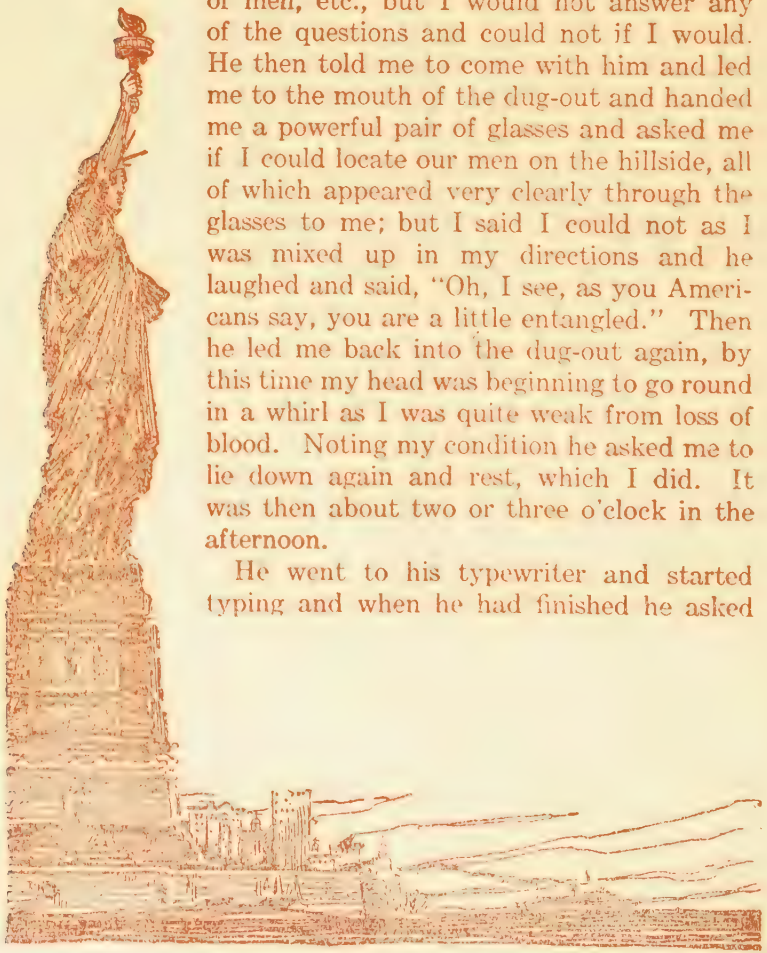
While I was eating Prinz and two other officers started asking me questions about our outfit, but finding it of no avail as I was still hungrily gulping down the food and between bites told them I was too busy to talk then. In the meantime my leg started bleeding terribly and paining me so that I hardly cared what happened. Prinz called the medical officer again who undressed the wound, placed something on it that seemed to stop the bleeding and then placing a turniquet above the wound, bade me lie down on the couch again.

Then Prinz started asking me questions in earnest. He was very kind about the whole affair and at no time did he or any of the Germans with whom I came in contact treat me roughly or in any way abuse me. Prinz asked me what State I was from and I said "Ohio," he said, "Oh yes, I have been there to Cincinnati." And then he told me he had been in business for six years in Seattle, Washington. He said that he greatly admired



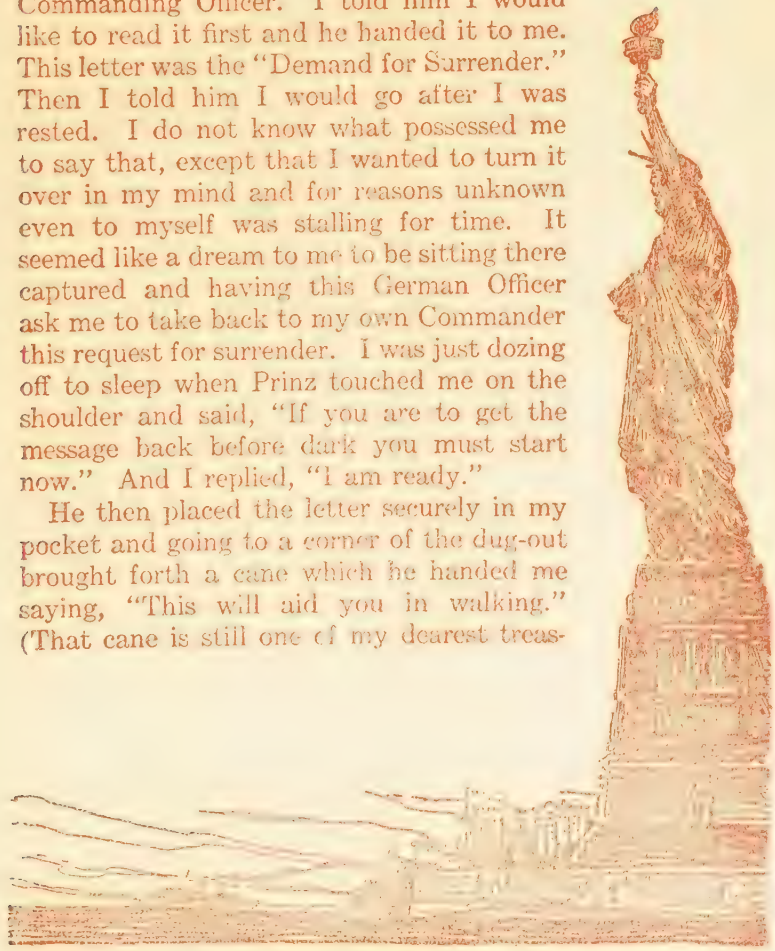
the courage of our men on the hill and felt sorry for them. He then tried to find out how much ammunition we had, the number of men, etc., but I would not answer any of the questions and could not if I would. He then told me to come with him and led me to the mouth of the dug-out and handed me a powerful pair of glasses and asked me if I could locate our men on the hillside, all of which appeared very clearly through the glasses to me; but I said I could not as I was mixed up in my directions and he laughed and said, "Oh, I see, as you Americans say, you are a little entangled." Then he led me back into the dug-out again, by this time my head was beginning to go round in a whirl as I was quite weak from loss of blood. Noting my condition he asked me to lie down again and rest, which I did. It was then about two or three o'clock in the afternoon.

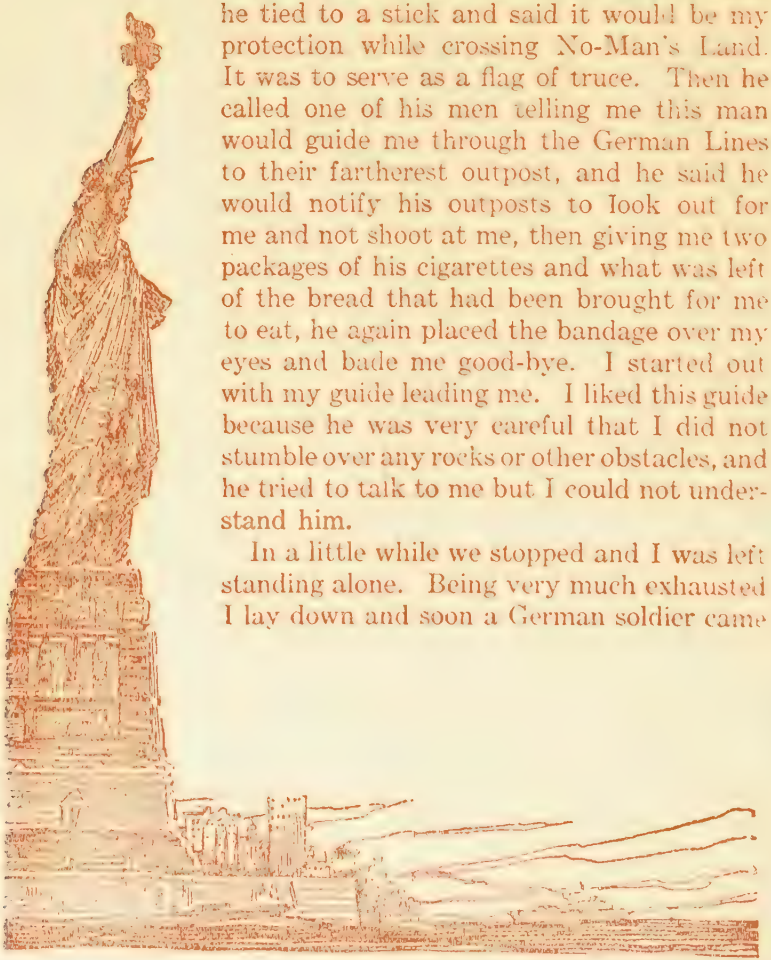
He went to his typewriter and started typing and when he had finished he asked



me if I would take a letter back to my Commanding Officer. I told him I would like to read it first and he handed it to me. This letter was the "Demand for Surrender." Then I told him I would go after I was rested. I do not know what possessed me to say that, except that I wanted to turn it over in my mind and for reasons unknown even to myself was stalling for time. It seemed like a dream to me to be sitting there captured and having this German Officer ask me to take back to my own Commander this request for surrender. I was just dozing off to sleep when Prinz touched me on the shoulder and said, "If you are to get the message back before dark you must start now." And I replied, "I am ready."

He then placed the letter securely in my pocket and going to a corner of the dug-out brought forth a cane which he handed me saying, "This will aid you in walking." (That cane is still one of my dearest treas-





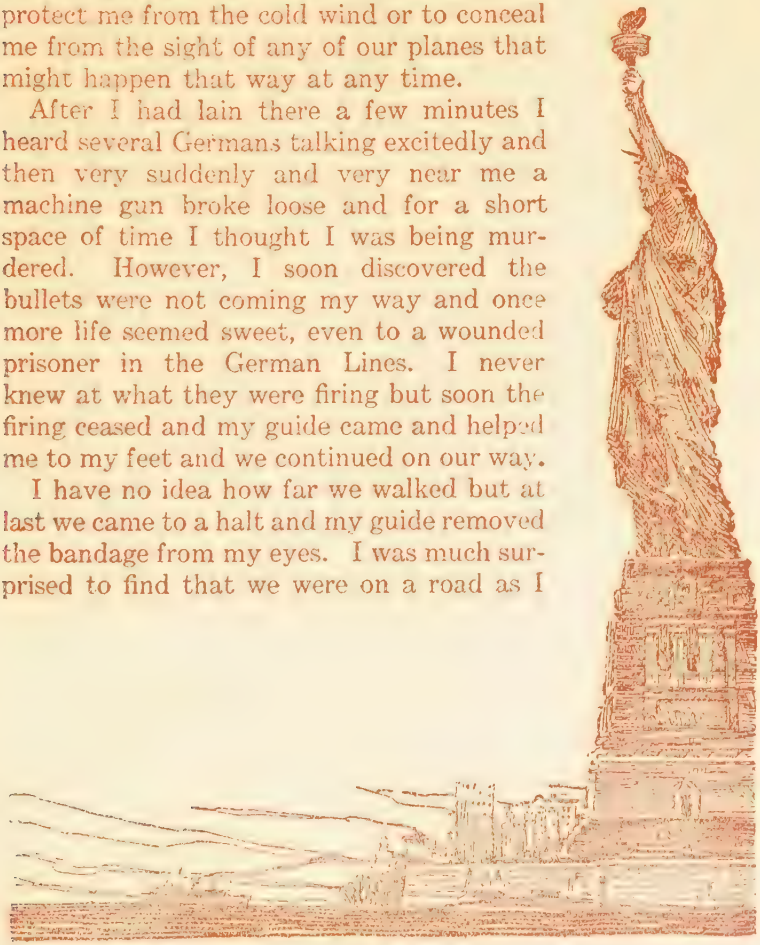
ures). Next he went to the Doctor's dug-out and came back with a white cloth which he tied to a stick and said it would be my protection while crossing No-Man's Land. It was to serve as a flag of truce. Then he called one of his men telling me this man would guide me through the German Lines to their fartherest outpost, and he said he would notify his outposts to look out for me and not shoot at me, then giving me two packages of his cigarettes and what was left of the bread that had been brought for me to eat, he again placed the bandage over my eyes and bade me good-bye. I started out with my guide leading me. I liked this guide because he was very careful that I did not stumble over any rocks or other obstacles, and he tried to talk to me but I could not understand him.

In a little while we stopped and I was left standing alone. Being very much exhausted I lay down and soon a German soldier came

and threw an overcoat over me. I was thankful for this as I was really chilly but I do not know whether this was done to protect me from the cold wind or to conceal me from the sight of any of our planes that might happen that way at any time.

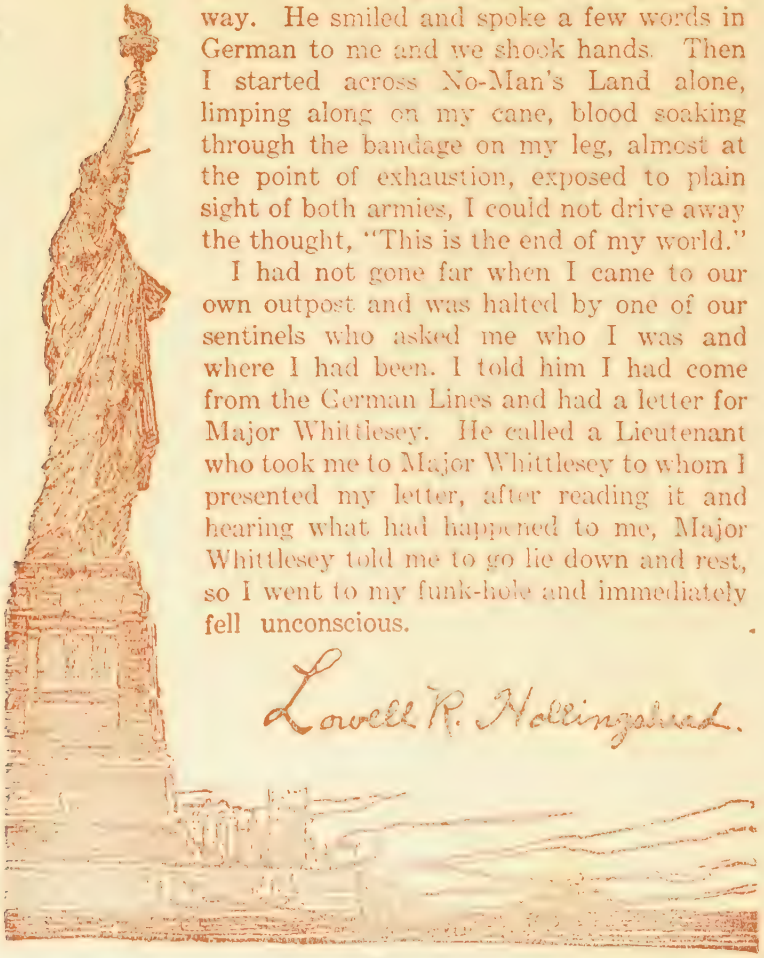
After I had lain there a few minutes I heard several Germans talking excitedly and then very suddenly and very near me a machine gun broke loose and for a short space of time I thought I was being murdered. However, I soon discovered the bullets were not coming my way and once more life seemed sweet, even to a wounded prisoner in the German Lines. I never knew at what they were firing but soon the firing ceased and my guide came and helped me to my feet and we continued on our way.

I have no idea how far we walked but at last we came to a halt and my guide removed the bandage from my eyes. I was much surprised to find that we were on a road as I



remembered no road in that part of the forest. He pointed straight down the road and I knew he meant for me to travel that way. He smiled and spoke a few words in German to me and we shook hands. Then I started across No-Man's Land alone, limping along on my cane, blood soaking through the bandage on my leg, almost at the point of exhaustion, exposed to plain sight of both armies, I could not drive away the thought, "This is the end of my world."

I had not gone far when I came to our own outpost and was halted by one of our sentinels who asked me who I was and where I had been. I told him I had come from the German Lines and had a letter for Major Whittlesey. He called a Lieutenant who took me to Major Whittlesey to whom I presented my letter, after reading it and hearing what had happened to me, Major Whittlesey told me to go lie down and rest, so I went to my funk-hole and immediately fell unconscious.



Lowell R. Hollingshead.

PRIVATE ABRAHAM KROTOSHINSKY

Runner for Lieut. Col. Chas. W. Whittlesey, who delivered message that rescued Lost Battalion
Awarded Distinguished Service Cross

Private Krotoshinsky's Experience

Written expressly for this publication by Abraham Krotoshinsky, runner for Whittlesey, who broke through the German lines with the message that rescued the "Lost Battalion".

As a member of the Lost Battalion, my experiences were as follows:

For five days and nights Major Whittlesey and Captain McMurtry had been sending out messengers in the attempt to get information back to the balance of the 77th Division. Every messenger sent back was either captured or killed by the Germans. Major Whittlesey called for volunteers and I was chosen.

I started at sun-up on a gray, gloomy day, already weak from lack of food and already convinced that death would be the only outcome. I didn't care. After five days of being fired at, hope was gone, and all I wanted was peace. Yet there must have been a spark of hope that kept me going.

My worst experience of the day came early in the morning. I was lying just behind the German lines concealed beneath some bushes when a German officer walked by and accidentally stepped on my fingers. I managed to stay quiet, but it took a great deal of effort. It was several hours before I could leave my place of concealment.

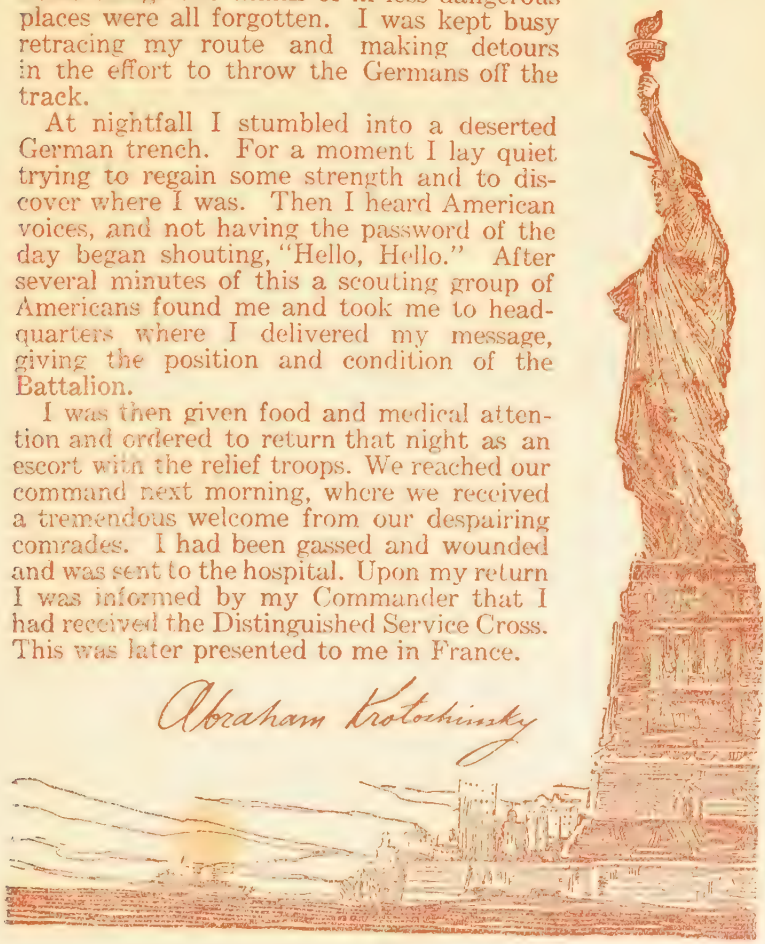
All day I was under heavy fire. Every minute I thought they would get me, I

expected death, but I thought of it only as a physical thing, nothing more. I thought of nothing but the necessity of getting that message through. Home, friends, memories, those things one thinks of in less dangerous places were all forgotten. I was kept busy retracing my route and making detours in the effort to throw the Germans off the track.

At nightfall I stumbled into a deserted German trench. For a moment I lay quiet trying to regain some strength and to discover where I was. Then I heard American voices, and not having the password of the day began shouting, "Hello, Hello." After several minutes of this a scouting group of Americans found me and took me to headquarters where I delivered my message, giving the position and condition of the Battalion.

I was then given food and medical attention and ordered to return that night as an escort with the relief troops. We reached our command next morning, where we received a tremendous welcome from our despairing comrades. I had been gassed and wounded and was sent to the hospital. Upon my return I was informed by my Commander that I had received the Distinguished Service Cross. This was later presented to me in France.

Abraham Krotoshinsky



The Fight of The Lost Battalion

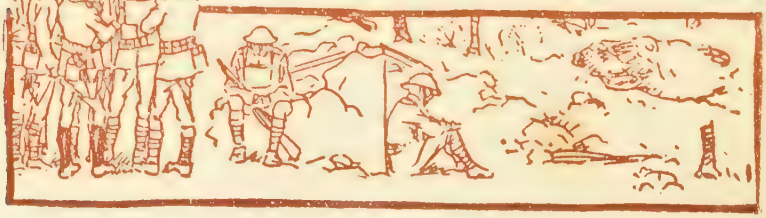
Back of Florent, in the Argonne Forest,
Were gathered a handful of men,
Waiting the word to "go in" once more;
To come out—God alone knew when.

East met West in those few short hours,
And were drawn together as one,
As brother to brother, and man to man.
They met to suppress the Hun.

Each of them were thinking thots,
That come to but very few men,
Tomorrow they'd go "Over the Top,"
Some never to come back again.

The air and trees were full of sounds,
As we started "in" that night;
With dull heavy thud of feet on the ground,
We went marching towards the fight.

To an open space in the road we came,
And God! what a sight we did see!
The skyline ablaze with one great red flame;
'Twas our barrage for Democracy.



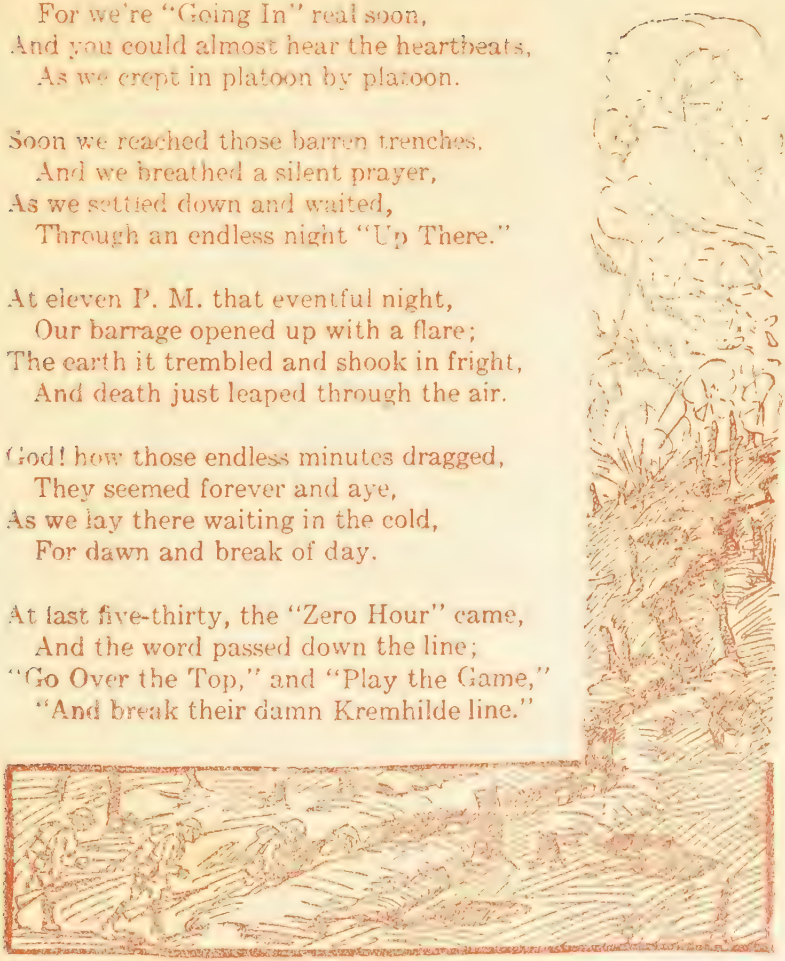
Sh-h! Hush! Make no noise,
For we're "Going In" real soon,
And you could almost hear the heartbeats,
As we crept in platoon by platoon.

Soon we reached those barren trenches,
And we breathed a silent prayer,
As we settled down and waited,
Through an endless night "Up There."

At eleven P. M. that eventful night,
Our barrage opened up with a flare;
The earth it trembled and shook in fright,
And death just leaped through the air.

God! how those endless minutes dragged,
They seemed forever and aye,
As we lay there waiting in the cold,
For dawn and break of day.

At last five-thirty, the "Zero Hour" came,
And the word passed down the line;
"Go Over the Top," and "Play the Game,"
"And break their damn Kremhilde line."

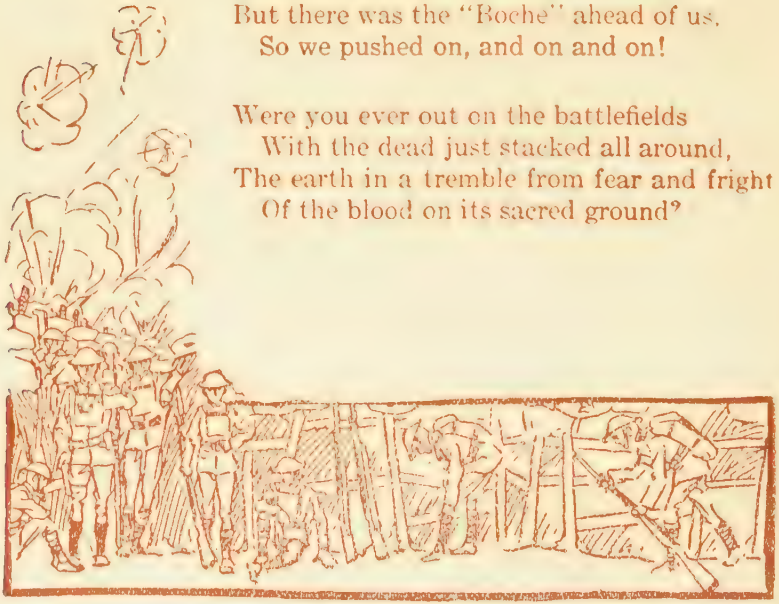


What did we find when "Over the Top",
In that waste called "No Man's Land"?
An ocean of wire in the mist and the fog,
Placed there by the devil's own hand.

All day long we pushed him back,
By night we'd his second line trench;
Then we "dug in," and waited for him,
By morn, with the rain we were drenched.

The men were gaunt with hunger,
For what food we had was gone,
But there was the "Boche" ahead of us,
So we pushed on, and on and on!

Were you ever out on the battlefields
With the dead just stacked all around,
The earth in a tremble from fear and fright
Of the blood on its sacred ground?

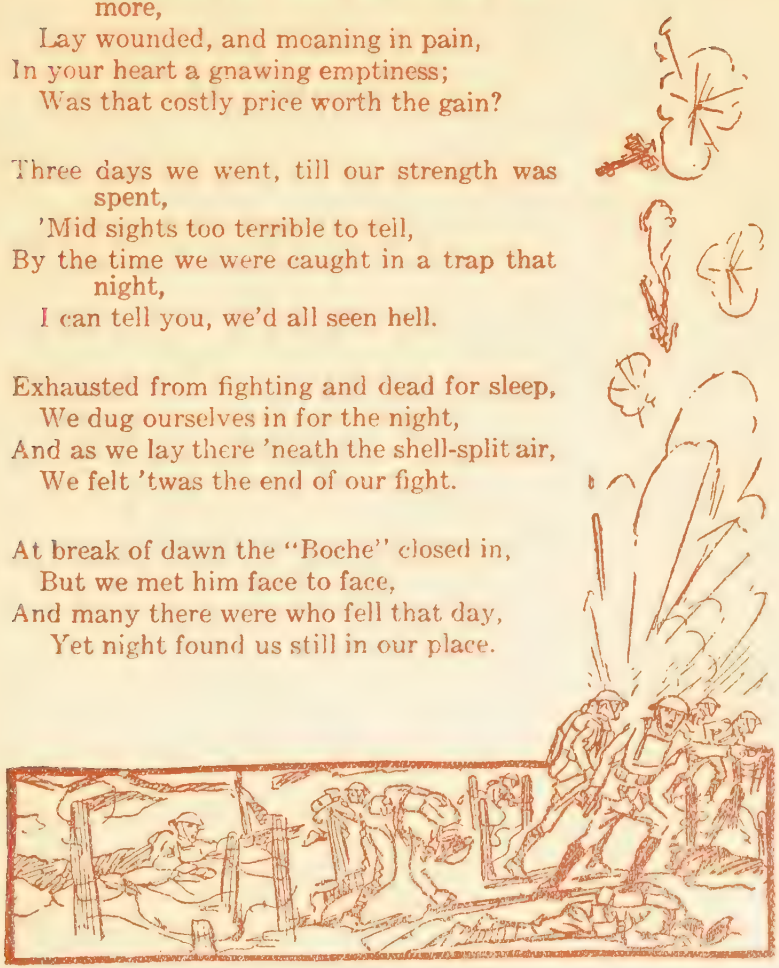


While comrades you loved as brothers, and more,
Lay wounded, and moaning in pain,
In your heart a gnawing emptiness;
Was that costly price worth the gain?

Three days we went, till our strength was spent,
'Mid sights too terrible to tell,
By the time we were caught in a trap that night,
I can tell you, we'd all seen hell.

Exhausted from fighting and dead for sleep,
We dug ourselves in for the night,
And as we lay there 'neath the shell-split air,
We felt 'twas the end of our fight.

At break of dawn the "Boche" closed in,
But we met him face to face,
And many there were who fell that day,
Yet night found us still in our place.



For three long days we fought in that trap,
In mud clear up to our knees,
Sleepless, hungry, dying from thirst,
'Neath those splintered Argonne trees.

All hopes gone, our hearts in despair,
When a whisper came down the line,
At last the longed-for relief had arrived,
God knows it came just in time.

We went at the food like a pack of wolves,
That had starved the whole winter through,
And between the munching of bites you'd hear,
Mumbled prayers - and curses, too.

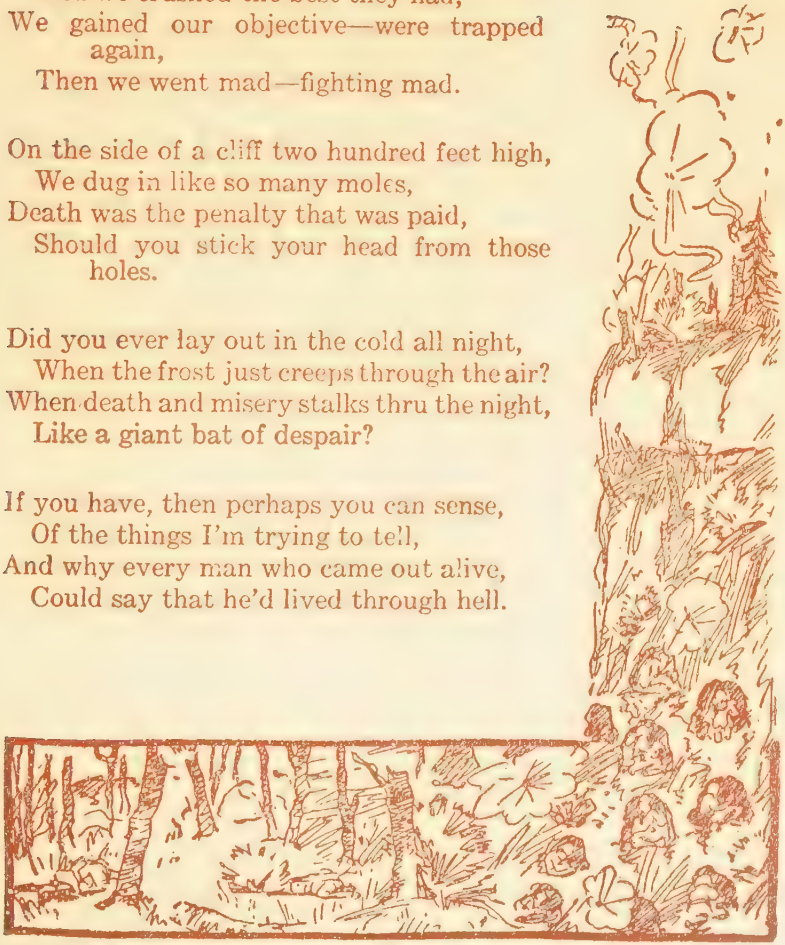
No one could picture, try as they might,
The horror and hell of it all,
Our Company lost ninety men that night,
Yet it mattered as nothing at all.

But on and on we carried the fight,
And we crushed the best they had,
We gained our objective—were trapped again,
Then we went mad—fighting mad.

On the side of a cliff two hundred feet high,
We dug in like so many moles,
Death was the penalty that was paid,
Should you stick your head from those holes.

Did you ever lay out in the cold all night,
When the frost just creeps through the air?
When death and misery stalks thru the night,
Like a giant bat of despair?

If you have, then perhaps you can sense,
Of the things I'm trying to tell,
And why every man who came out alive,
Could say that he'd lived through hell.



Fighting all day, holding out by pure grit,
And fighting at night by the flare,
The suffering we bore can never be told,
Of those six days and nights spent there.

Death thinned our ranks, took tenfold her toll,
Of our buddies, your brothers and sons,
But before they went, tho their strength was spent,
They took their share of the Huns.

Relief came at last as it always does
When you're backed by red-blooded men;
But we were so weak, so many were gone,
Nothing mattered at all by then.

We stumbled out more dead than alive,
To food, shelter and rest,
While others tenderly cared for those,
Who had passed to eternal rest.

The price was made and the price was paid,
And as part of the cost of war,
"Our Company went in two-fifty strong,
And came out with but forty and four."

Mother

At close of spring day in Sable,
I sat in my room all alone,
And the sun was slowly sinking,
As my thots turned back to home.

Thots of my dear lonely mother,
And how much was hers to bear,
Then again in my fancy I'd see her,
In an old and familiar chair.

Always a-thinking of me,
And constantly praying too,
Slowly it then dawned on me,
Of all that she had been through.

The long endless nights of waiting,
And those anxious days of pain,
The wishing, hoping and praying,
For my safe returning again.

As skies went tinting blue and gold,
I knelt in reverent prayer,
Blessing the mothers of *all* men,
God's Heroes, waiting "Back There."

My first poem, dedicated to my truest friend,
"My Mother."

Treasures

Treasures in bits of papers,
Treasures in mines of gold,
Treasures in age seared relics,
And in paintings worn and old.

Each to his way of thinking,
Has a treasure in his grasp,
Mine came from the heart of a rough-neck
And lay in a simple hand-clasp.

'Twas in the lines in the heat of a fight,
And the devil was our host,
He'd shown us all his tricks and stunts,
As we lay in a stranded outpost.

Without water, food or shelter,
We had lain out there for days;
Exhausted and slowly dying,
Our eyes beginning to glaze.

Our orders were to hold that post,
Against any odds that might come,
And we were sticking it out alone,
Just myself and my Dago chum.

Just a bit of a so-called Wop,
Was this boy along with me;
But fighting just as hard as I,
Who was born of Liberty.

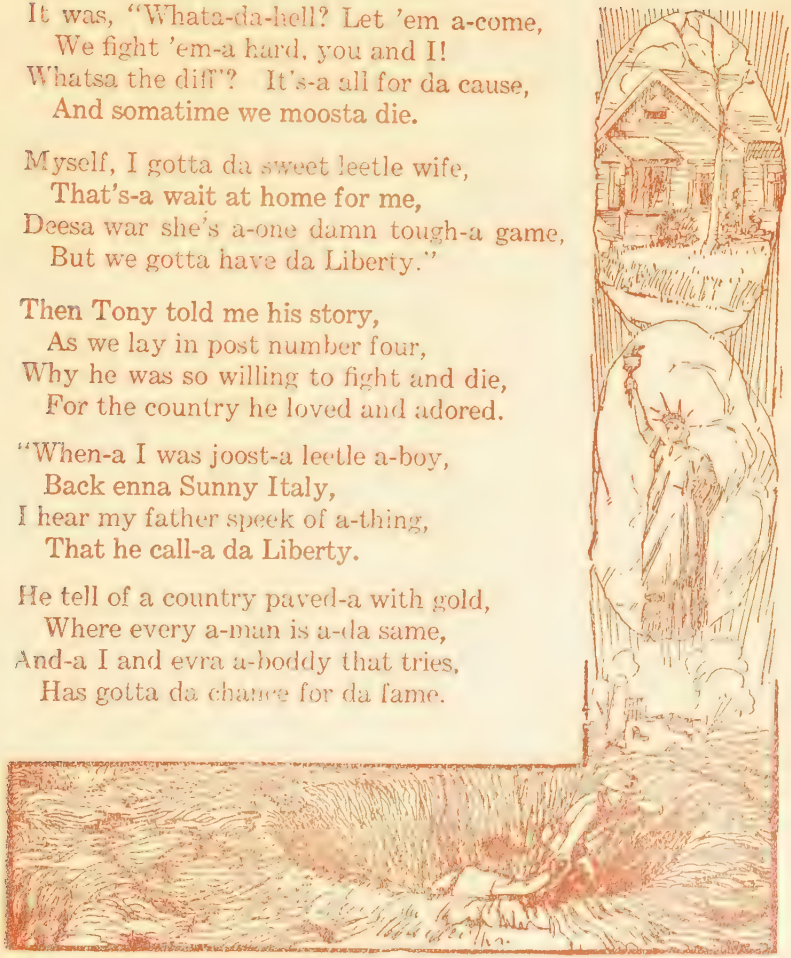
It was, "Whata-da-hell? Let 'em a-come,
We fight 'em-a hard, you and I!
Whatsa the diff'? It's-a all for da cause,
And somatime we moosta die.

Myself, I gotta da sweet leetle wife,
That's-a wait at home for me,
Deesa war she's a-one damn tough-a game,
But we gotta have da Liberty."

Then Tony told me his story,
As we lay in post number four,
Why he was so willing to fight and die,
For the country he loved and adored.

"When-a I was joost-a leetle a-boy,
Back enna Sunny Italy,
I hear my father speek of a-thing,
That he call-a da Liberty.

He tell of a country paved-a with gold,
Where every a-man is a-da same,
And-a I and evra a-boddy that tries,
Has gotta da chance for da fame.



Where no King and Queen can tell-a you,
Joosta what you got to do,
I'm a get-a thinkin' to myself,
How-a grand if datsa true.

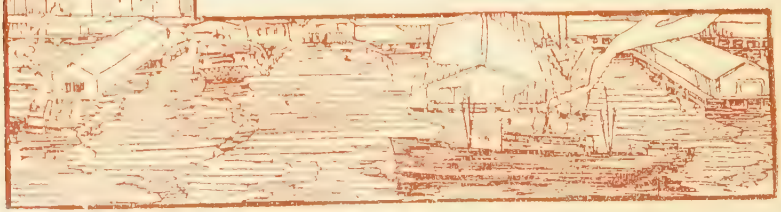
So, by-un-by, I grow up,
Beega strong-a boy, 'bout seexteen,
And come along in a steerage boat,
To da wonderful land of my dream.

And there I find-a it's joosta so true,
Sure—Evra-ting is a-right!
I'm-a live in-a great-a free country,
My own-a boss day and a-night.

Evra-a-body's-a joosta so free,
He's almost-a like da bird,
Only work-a so much evra day,
No lik-a da sheep are you herd.

An' den, I meet-a my sweet-a Marie,
And we get-a marry one sunny day,
Then we build-a pretty leetl-a home,
By time, leetl-a babee cum our way.

Oh, evra-ting she's-a joosta so nice,
And I'm-a cum along joosta fine,
Until-a da Kaiz, he getta so fresh,
Right along about deesa time.



Evra thing he want ta take,
An' mak-a do joost what he said,
I tell-a you I no like-a dat stoff,
I'd much-a rather be dead.

So I grab-a da gun and cum along,
Like-a all-a da rest who are here,
'Cause I'm gonna fight for what is-a right,
And-a my leetl-a home so dear.

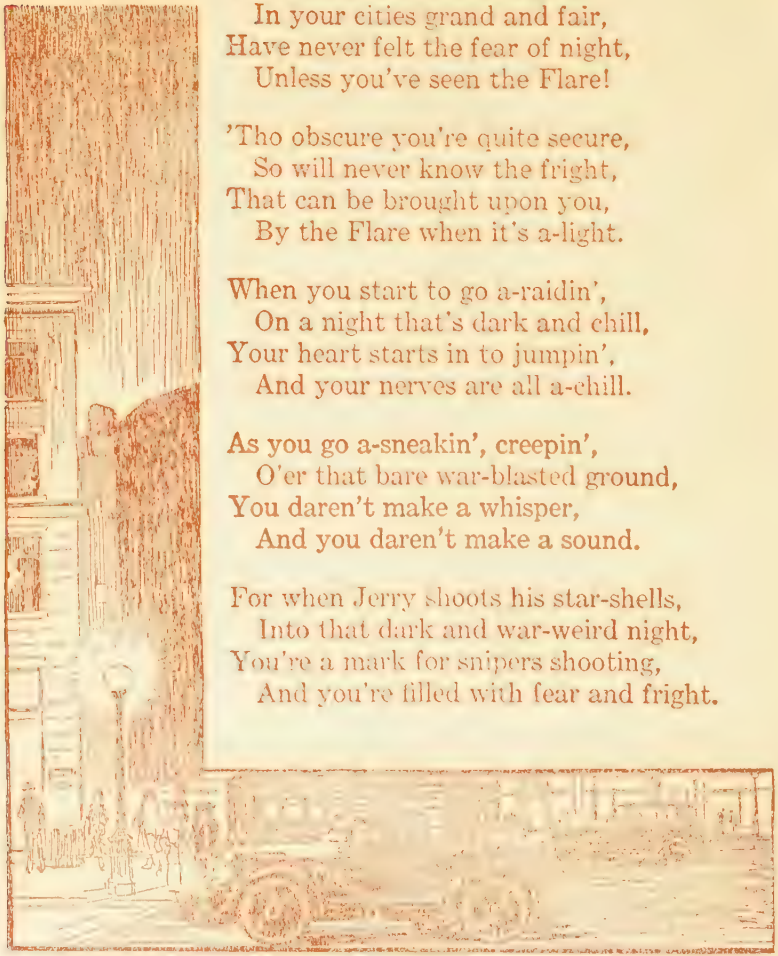
Leesten, I don't-a mind-a dees now,
'Cause-a we're here all alone,
Sure, evrateeng cum out all-a right,
An' by-time we all go home.

Now wait, joosta you lie quiet,
While I look-a 'round a-beet,
But don't-a forget to tell-a Marie,
In-a case I'm-a mabbe get heet."

He took and shook me by the hand,
Then he started out alone,
To me it brought an awakening,
And the treasure now that I own.

So I'm done with material treasures,
Such as relics, mines and things,
And treasure instead the memories,
Of love that sacrifice brings.

The Flare!



You who know electric lights,
In your cities grand and fair,
Have never felt the fear of night,
Unless you've seen the Flare!

'Tho obscure you're quite secure,
So will never know the fright,
That can be brought upon you,
By the Flare when it's a-light.

When you start to go a-raidin',
On a night that's dark and chill,
Your heart starts in to jumpin',
And your nerves are all a-chill.

As you go a-sneakin', creepin',
O'er that bare war-blasted ground,
You daren't make a whisper,
And you daren't make a sound.

For when Jerry shoots his star-shells,
Into that dark and war-weird night,
You're a mark for snipers shooting,
And you're filled with fear and fright.

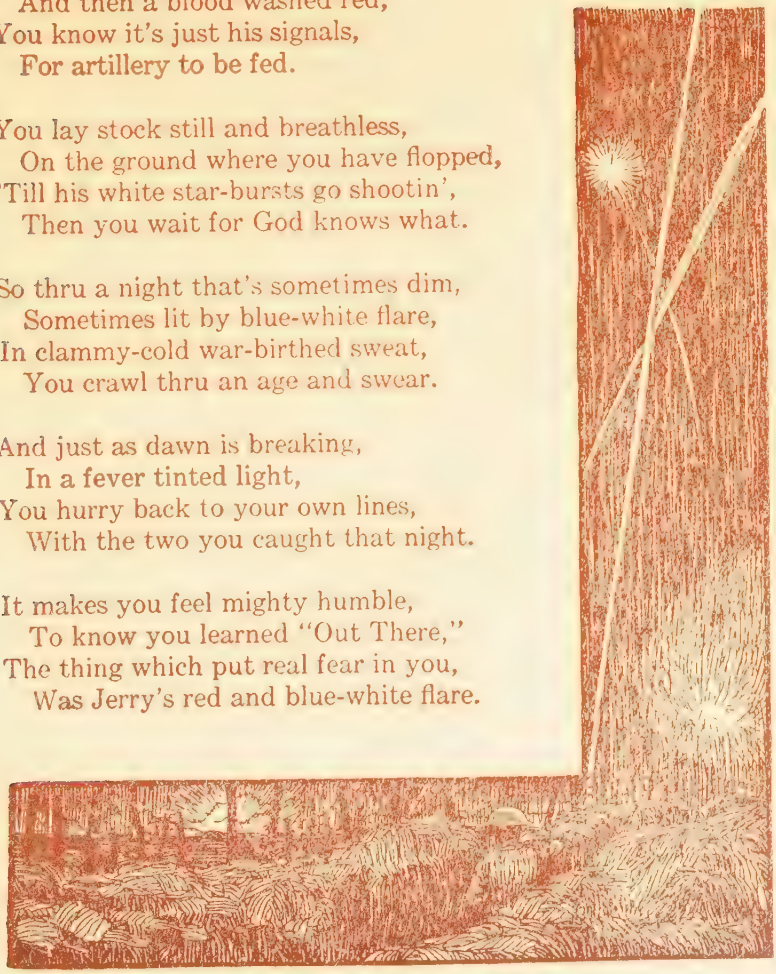
If you see him shoot a green one,
And then a blood washed red,
You know it's just his signals,
For artillery to be fed.

You lay stock still and breathless,
On the ground where you have flopped,
'Till his white star-bursts go shootin',
Then you wait for God knows what.

So thru a night that's sometimes dim,
Sometimes lit by blue-white flare,
In clammy-cold war-birthed sweat,
You crawl thru an age and swear.

And just as dawn is breaking,
In a fever tinted light,
You hurry back to your own lines,
With the two you caught that night.

It makes you feel mighty humble,
To know you learned "Out There,"
The thing which put real fear in you,
Was Jerry's red and blue-white flare.



Visions

In early morn when day is born,
Night shadows start to fade,
I gaze upon a land shell-torn,
That war alone has made.
And as the mist begins to lift,
Dim lines of a home I see,
Then by the fates' sardonic twist,
There comes a vision to me.

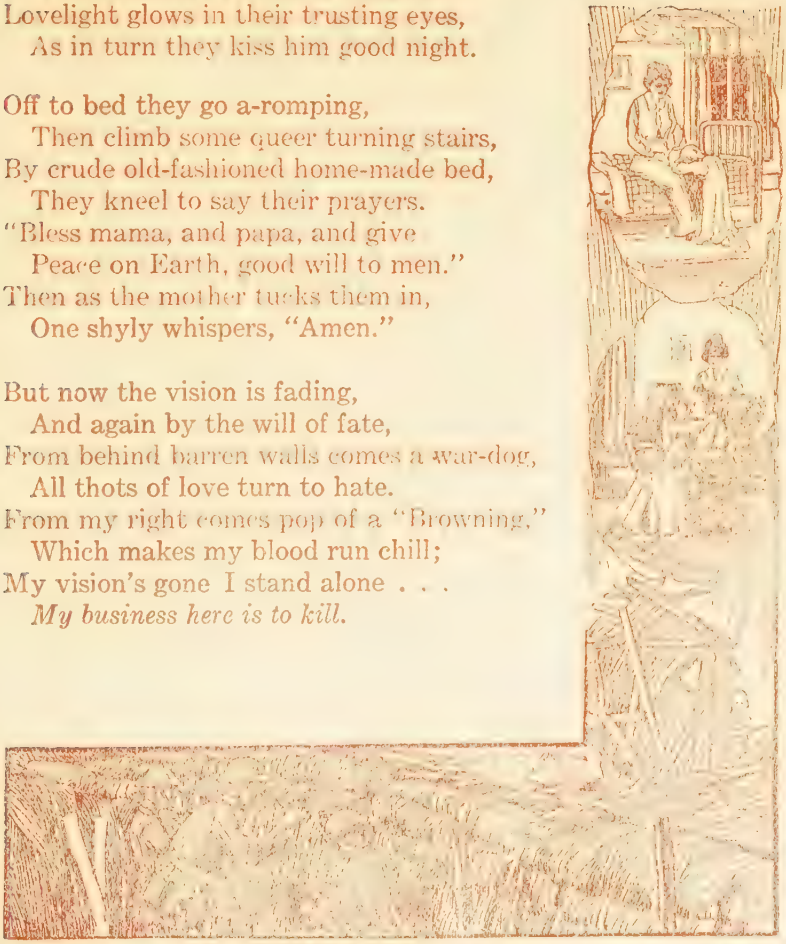
Instead of walls which barely stand,
Against skylines so drear,
Quaint cozy rooms I see instead,
And all that they hold dear.
As plainly tho 'tis painted there,
A happy family I see,
Gathered 'round the glowing fireside,
A child on a fond father's knee.

He's telling oft told tales of old,
Their childish love to endear,
A wondrous fairyland picture he paints,
With master's stroke that is clear.

Then comes the end of this simple tale,
Tis rewarded by cries of delight,
Lovelight glows in their trusting eyes,
As in turn they kiss him good night.

Off to bed they go a-romping,
Then climb some queer turning stairs,
By crude old-fashioned home-made bed,
They kneel to say their prayers.
"Bless mama, and papa, and give
Peace on Earth, good will to men."
Then as the mother tucks them in,
One shyly whispers, "Amen."

But now the vision is fading,
And again by the will of fate,
From behind barren walls comes a war-dog,
All thots of love turn to hate.
From my right comes pop of a "Browning,"
Which makes my blood run chill;
My vision's gone I stand alone . . .
My business here is to kill.



Detail Army

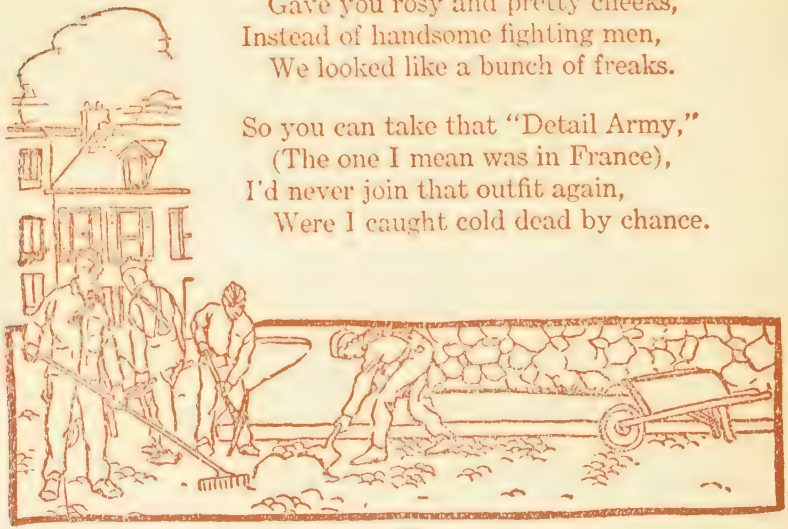
When all the fighting was over,
And we thot the job was all done,
They handed us brooms and shovels,
To clean up the century aged dung.

What a noble white-winged squad,
The A. E. F. turned out to be,
We cleaned up all the country towns,
Then started to clean up Paree.

French folks only laughed at us,
As we carted the stuff away,
Did you take it from their doorsteps,
They'd mutter, or curse or pray.

'Twas healthy work I'll grant you,
Gave you rosy and pretty cheeks,
Instead of handsome fighting men,
We looked like a bunch of freaks.

So you can take that "Detail Army,"
(The one I mean was in France),
I'd never join that outfit again,
Were I caught cold dead by chance.



The Bandolier

"Rhymes of a Lost Battalion Doughboy"

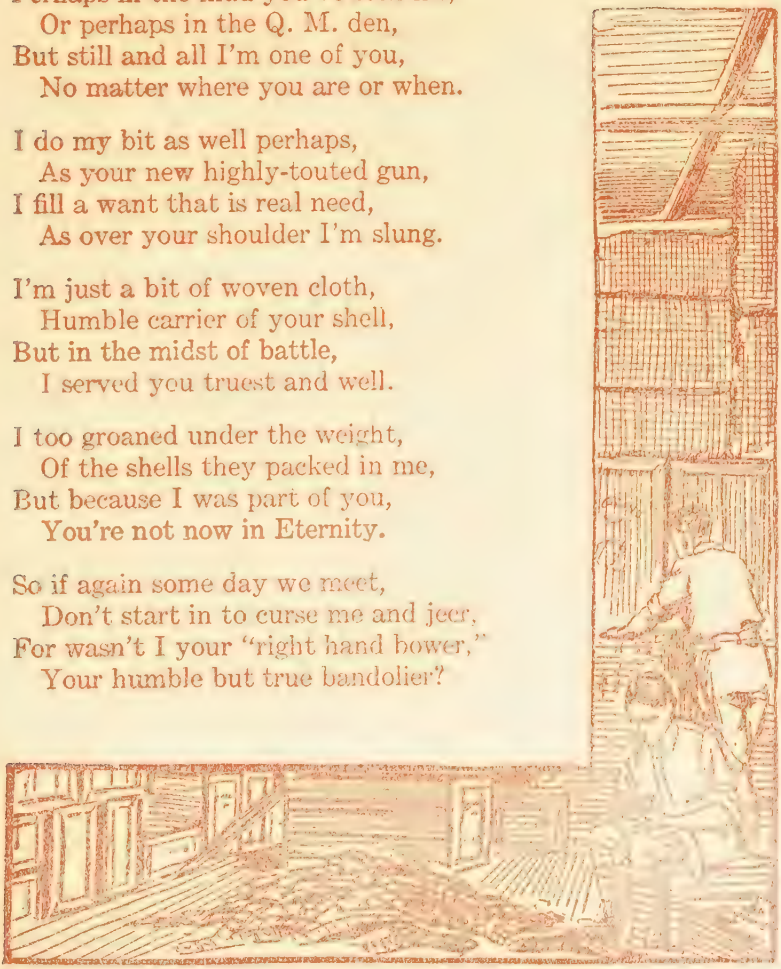
Perhaps in the mud you've seen me,
Or perhaps in the Q. M. den,
But still and all I'm one of you,
No matter where you are or when.

I do my bit as well perhaps,
As your new highly-touted gun,
I fill a want that is real need,
As over your shoulder I'm slung.

I'm just a bit of woven cloth,
Humble carrier of your shell,
But in the midst of battle,
I served you truest and well.

I too groaned under the weight,
Of the shells they packed in me,
But because I was part of you,
You're not now in Eternity.

So if again some day we meet,
Don't start in to curse me and jeer,
For wasn't I your "right hand bower,"
Your humble but true bandolier?



Going In

On a moonlit road with comrades I strode,
On my way to No-Man's-Land,
While artillerymen rode a-top o' their load,
Our heels kicked up the sand.

The squeak of the packs on weary backs,
Kept time to the clank o' steel,
Helmets gleamed in long endless stream,
As we marched through Iss-sur-Tille.

French on our right kept pace thru the night,
While the moon looked on pale and sad,
It seemed a mission of madmen and fools,
With all the world gone mad.

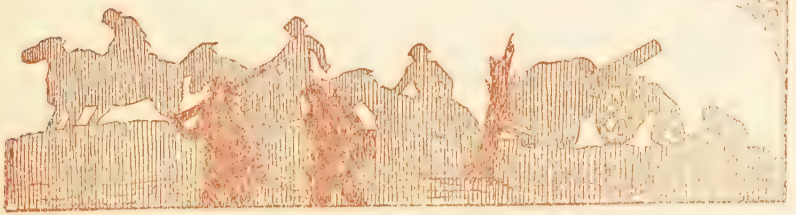
When our shadows would fall on forested wall,
A ghostly spector did make,
Our hopes dangled there, like half-naked prayers,
As we marched toward our wake.

We felt all a-chill as we topped a hill,
For there in the valley below,
The Jerries lay in wait of their prey.
Then the "God's of War" let go

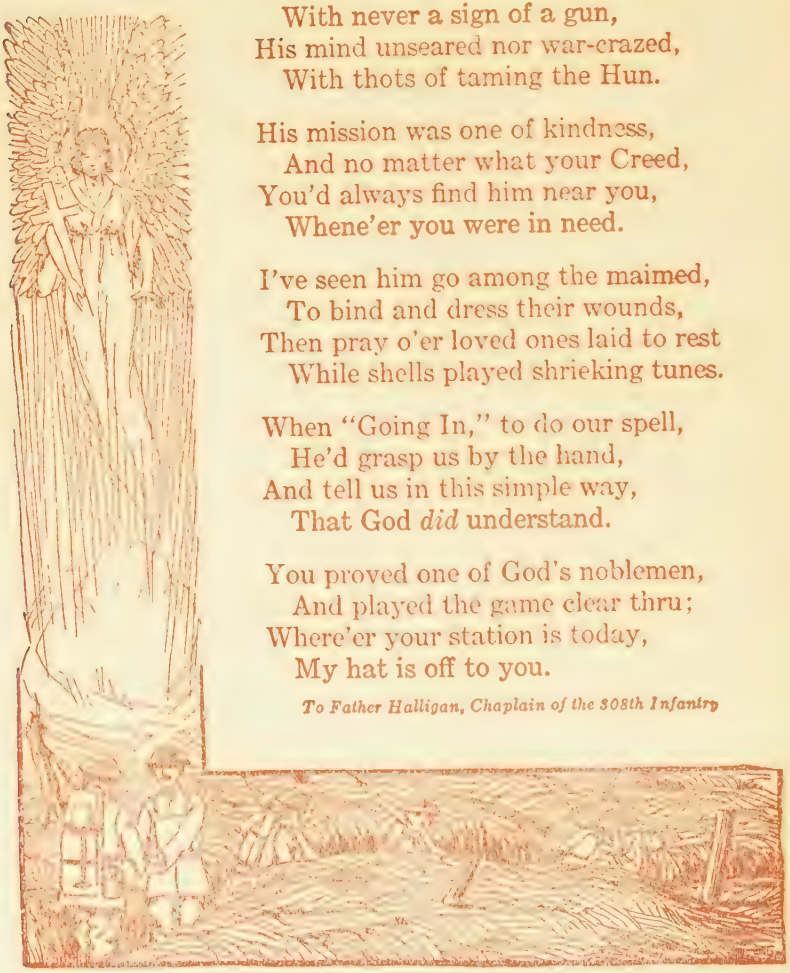
Men moaned in pain, shrieked in vain,
For the air was a blanket of lead,
Through that roaring din our souls shrunk within,
As death reaped her toll of those bled.

We'd have given our souls to get out of that hole,
But the Devil was the Piper,
So battle-typhooned we danced to his tunes,
And turned from men into Vipers.

The fight kept on till grey bleak dawn,
'Till we started our dead to bury,
"Harvest of Kill," was it God's will?
Pale stars looked on cold and starey.



Our Chaplain



He came and went amongst us,
With never a sign of a gun,
His mind unseared nor war-crazed,
With thots of taming the Hun.

His mission was one of kindness,
And no matter what your Creed,
You'd always find him near you,
Whene'er you were in need.

I've seen him go among the maimed,
To bind and dress their wounds,
Then pray o'er loved ones laid to rest
While shells played shrieking tunes.

When "Going In," to do our spell,
He'd grasp us by the hand,
And tell us in this simple way,
That God *did* understand.

You proved one of God's noblemen,
And played the game clear thru;
Where'er your station is today,
My hat is off to you.

To Father Halligan, Chaplain of the 308th Infantry

Just Troops

"Rhymes of a Lost Battalion Doughboy"

See those men who go marching by,
With manly stride and heads held high,
Light in their eyes that will ne'er burn out,
They are the troops . . shipping out.

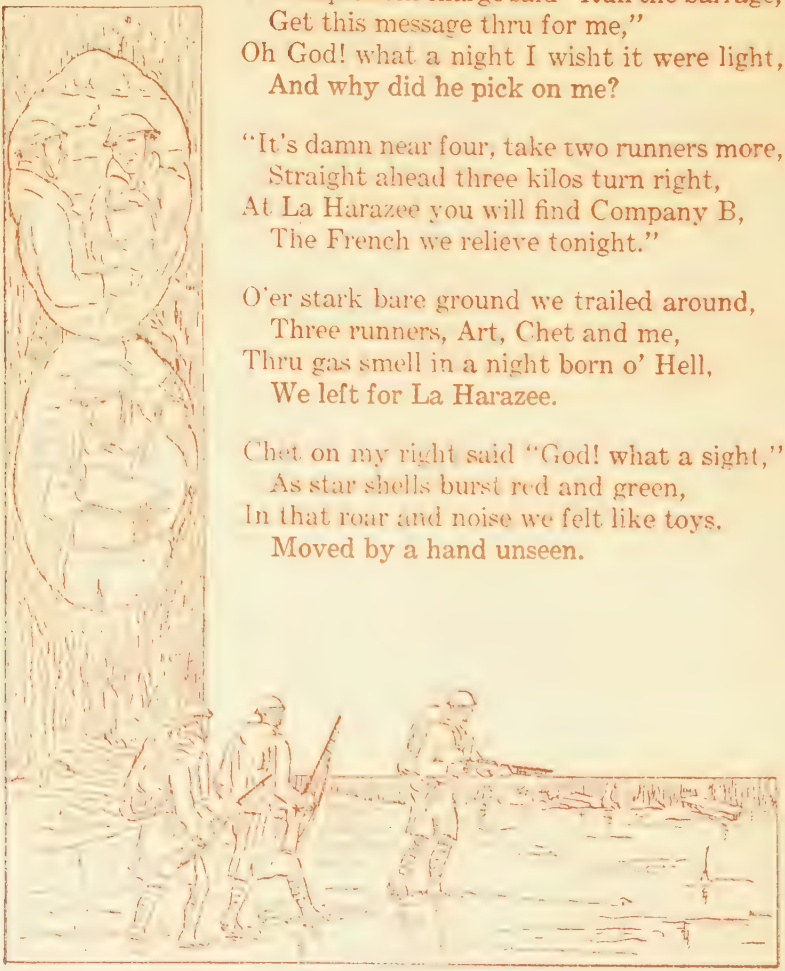
Been through it all from Ypre to the Meuse,
Seen all of Hell with the doors turned loose,
Shouldered their way between death and life
On their way home now to loved ones and wife.

Some will go South, some will go West,
North or East to homes God-blessed,
Some to palaces, some to huts;
Some to the heights and some the ruts.

Some to the plows, some to the wheels,
Some to earned bread or unearned meals;
Where'er they go, where'er they stay,
Today's their day of *all* their days.

For they are the troops, shipping out,
They are the ones for whom you shout,
They are the men who will always thrill,
With their tales of fight—*born of kill.*

That Night At La Harazee



The Captain in charge said "Run the barrage,
Get this message thru for me,"
Oh God! what a night I wisht it were light,
And why did he pick on me?

"It's damn near four, take two runners more,
Straight ahead three kilos turn right,
At La Harazee you will find Company B,
The French we relieve tonight."

O'er stark bare ground we trailed around,
Three runners, Art, Chet and me,
Thru gas smell in a night born o' Hell,
We left for La Harazee.

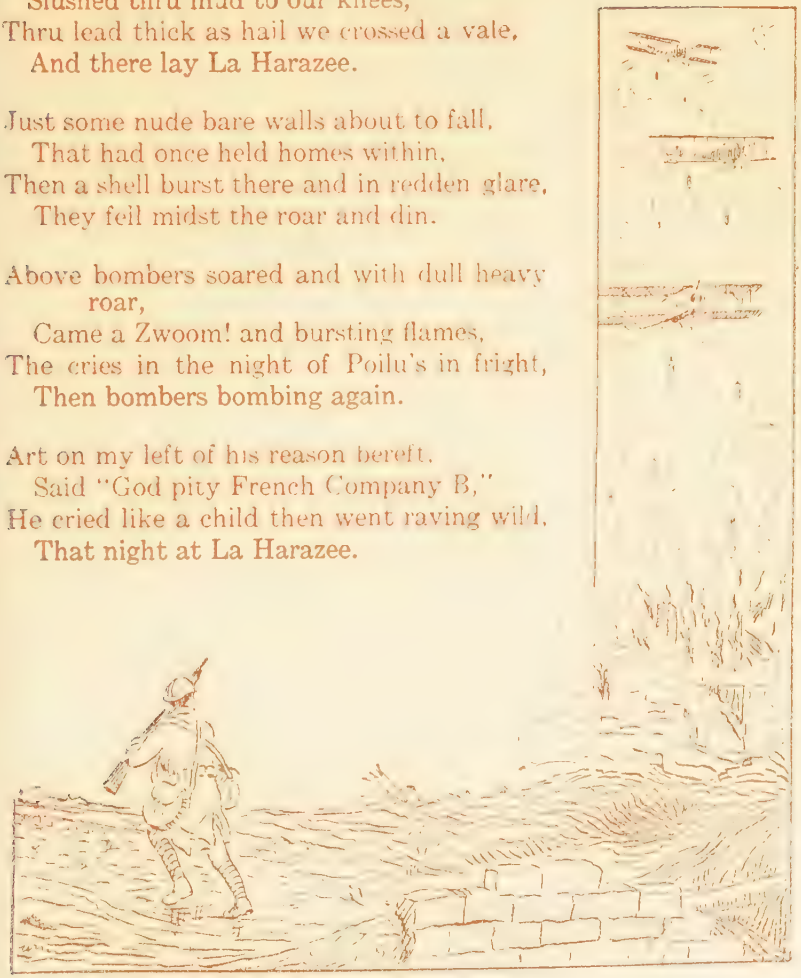
Chet on my right said "God! what a sight,"
As star shells burst red and green,
In that roar and noise we felt like toys,
Moved by a hand unseen.

The clouds did frown and the rain come down,
Slushed thru mud to our knees,
Thru lead thick as hail we crossed a vale,
And there lay La Harazee.

Just some nude bare walls about to fall,
That had once held homes within,
Then a shell burst there and in redden glare,
They fell midst the roar and din.

Above bombers soared and with dull heavy roar,
Came a Zwoom! and bursting flames,
The cries in the night of Poilu's in fright,
Then bombers bombing again.

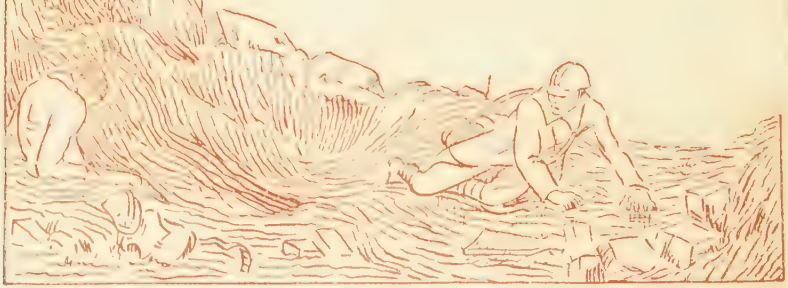
Art on my left of his reason bereft,
Said "God pity French Company B,"
He cried like a child then went raving wild,
That night at La Harazee.



Earth shook and shivered our nerves fairly quivered,
As we crouched in nearby trench,
As each bomb did hit our prayers went with it,
How our hearts did bleed for those French.

The planes up aloft turned tail and were off,
But the cries of the wounded kept on,
Mud-stained and rain-drenched we crawled from our trench,
With the first gray streaks of dawn.

We scrambled in haste past that war-made waste,
To some battle-scarred stumps and trees,
For a hole in the ground was all that we found,
That was left of La Harazee.



Buddies

"Rhymes of a Lost Battalion Doughboy"

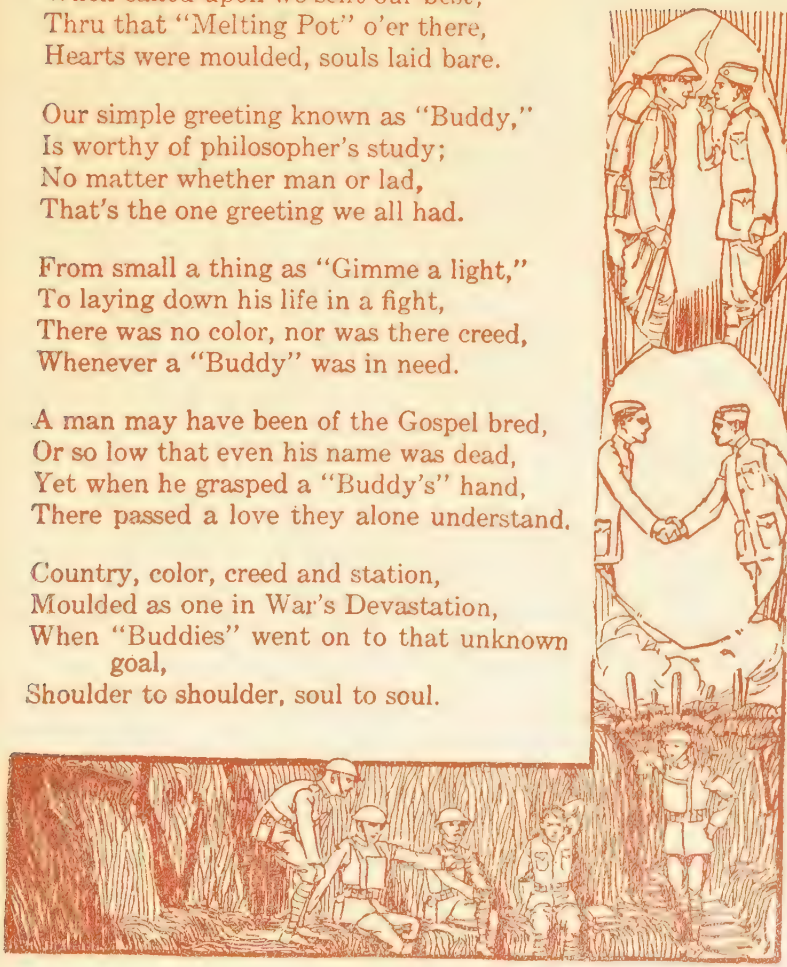
From the North, East, South and West,
When called upon we sent our best;
Thru that "Melting Pot" o'er there,
Hearts were moulded, souls laid bare.

Our simple greeting known as "Buddy,"
Is worthy of philosopher's study;
No matter whether man or lad,
That's the one greeting we all had.

From small a thing as "Gimme a light,"
To laying down his life in a fight,
There was no color, nor was there creed,
Whenever a "Buddy" was in need.

A man may have been of the Gospel bred,
Or so low that even his name was dead,
Yet when he grasped a "Buddy's" hand,
There passed a love they alone understand.

Country, color, creed and station,
Moulded as one in War's Devastation,
When "Buddies" went on to that unknown
goal,
Shoulder to shoulder, soul to soul.



Those Who Wait

Who knows the thots of mothers who wait,
Whether in grandeur, or lowly state;
Who knows the sacrifice of those who give,
Their all, their sons, that we might live?

The days are long as I sit here and knit,
Fashioning these socks for him . . bit by bit;
My thots are ever one constant prayer,
For my boy, my all, who is "Over There."

The long endless nights bring no rest,
My baby again nestles close to my breast;
Sense of his touch brings sweet poignant joy,
"May God watch o'er him, my own . . my boy."

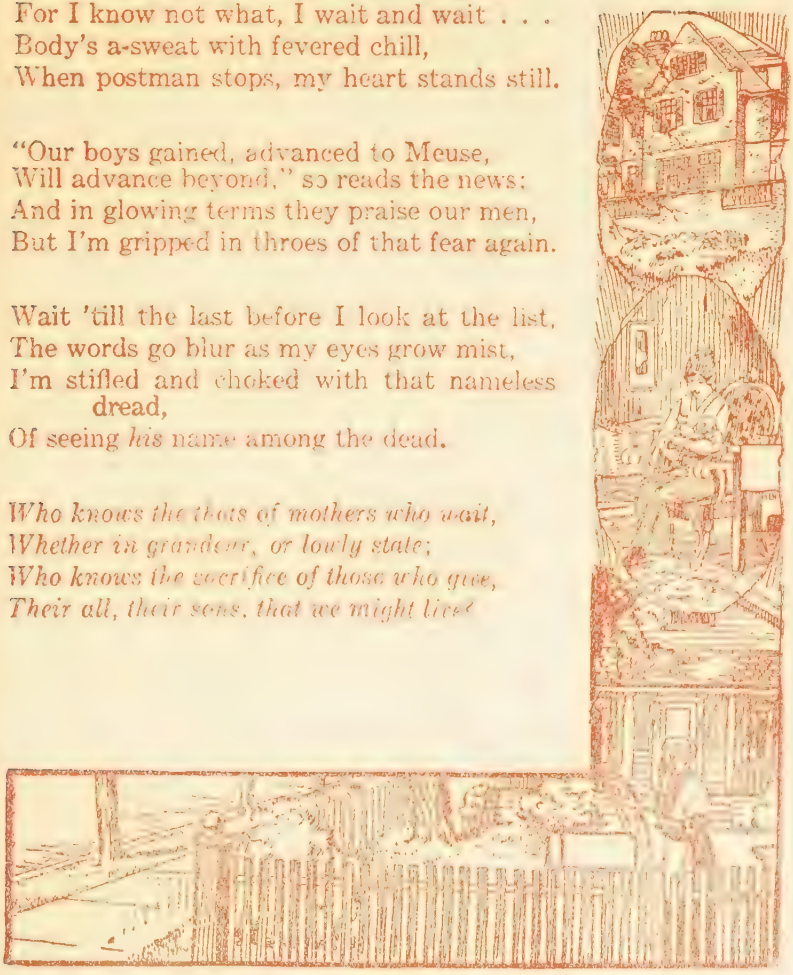
Was only a lad, but then he would go,
I'm heartsick dear Lord, proud of him tho.
Our country needed, he heard the call,
Light's gone from life, for he is my all.

Watching the mail box here by the gate,
For I know not what, I wait and wait . . .
Body's a-sweat with fevered chill,
When postman stops, my heart stands still.

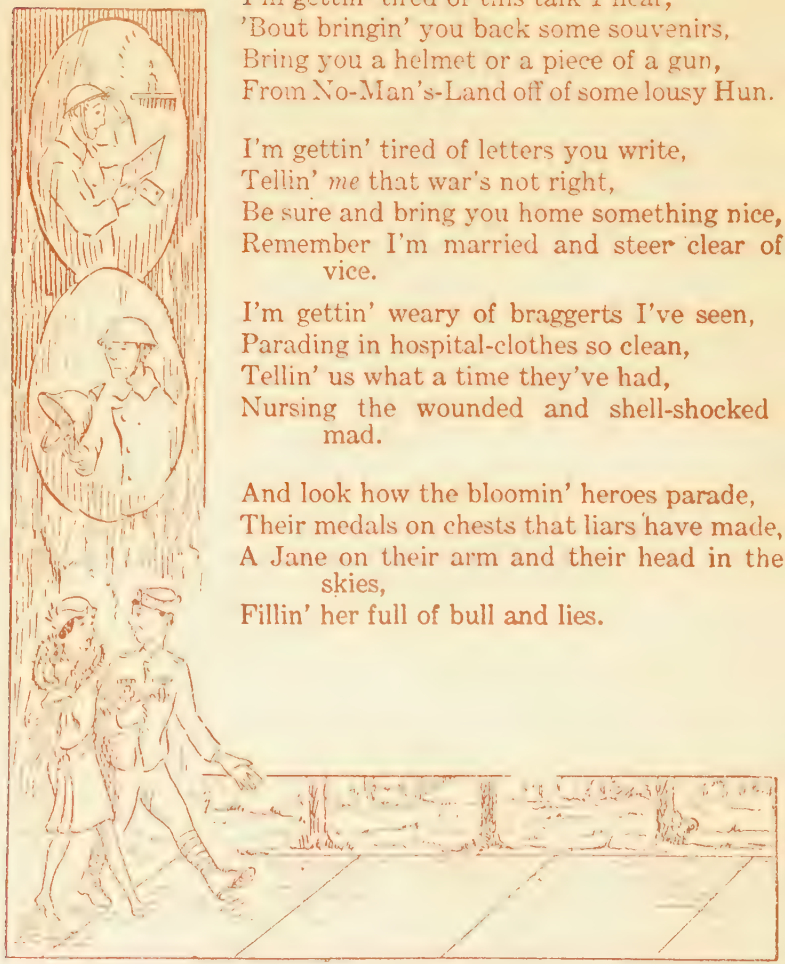
"Our boys gained, advanced to Meuse,
Will advance beyond," so reads the news;
And in glowing terms they praise our men,
But I'm gripped in throes of that fear again.

Wait 'till the last before I look at the list,
The words go blur as my eyes grow mist,
I'm stifled and choked with that nameless
dread,
Of seeing *his* name among the dead.

Who knows the thots of mothers who wait,
Whether in grandeur, or lowly state;
Who knows the sacrifice of those who give,
Their all, their sons, that we might live!



My Souvenir



I'm gettin' tired of this talk I hear,
'Bout bringin' you back some souvenirs,
Bring you a helmet or a piece of a gun,
From No-Man's-Land off of some lousy Hun.

I'm gettin' tired of letters you write,
Tellin' *me* that war's not right,
Be sure and bring you home something nice,
Remember I'm married and steer clear of vice.

I'm gettin' weary of braggerts I've seen,
Parading in hospital-clothes so clean,
Tellin' us what a time they've had,
Nursing the wounded and shell-shocked mad.

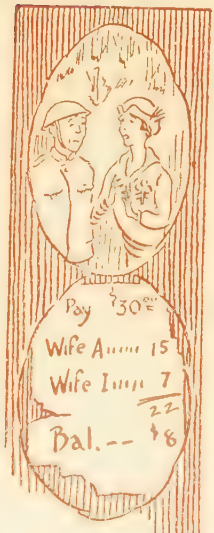
And look how the bloomin' heroes parade,
Their medals on chests that liars have made,
A Jane on their arm and their head in the skies,
Fillin' her full of bull and lies.

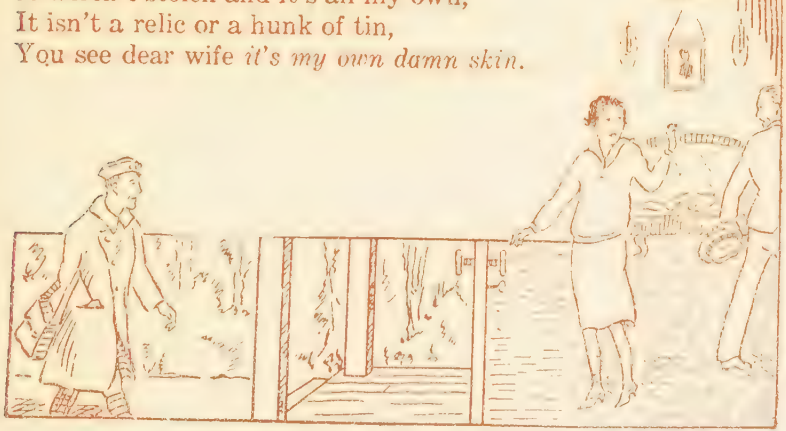
I'm gettin' tired of parades and the like,
And "please will you tell me what was war like?"
And "ain't it a shame and pity dear Bill?"
And "oh I hates the Huns you did kill."

I'm gettin' disgusted with payday,
Uncle Sam and the wife takes it all away,
It's ten for this and seven for that,
Till you don't know where the hell you're at.

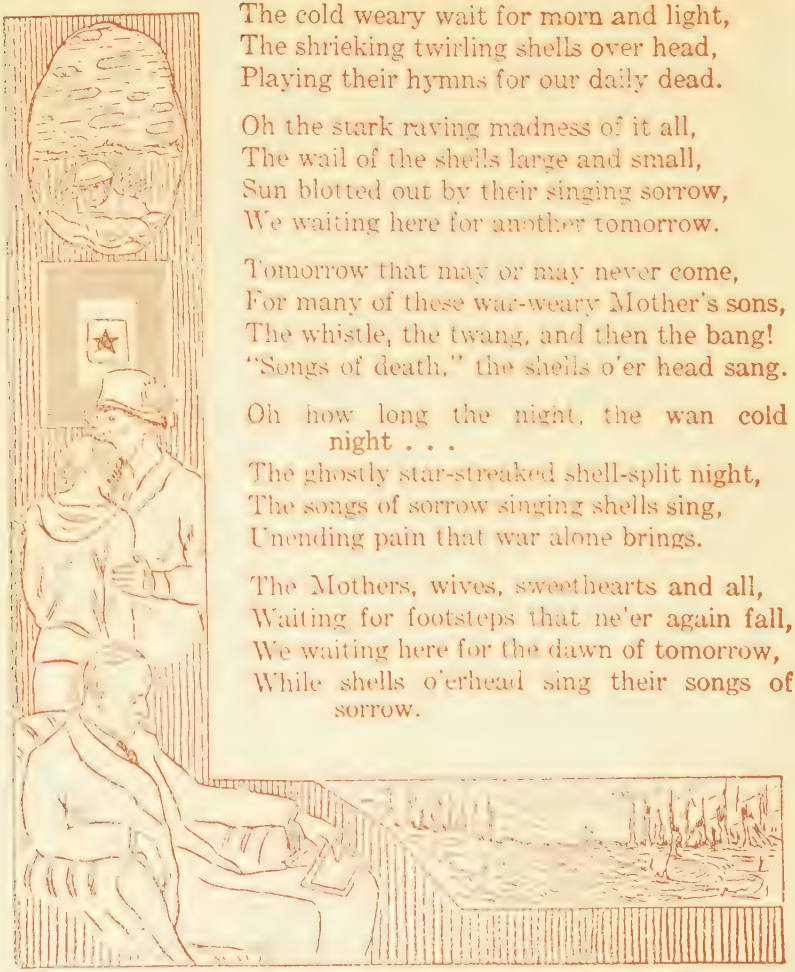
I'm wishin' for things war made me miss,
A bit of a hug and squeeze and a kiss,
A loving wife to hold close in my arms,
Not asking me, "where's my souvenir charms."

And the souvenir that I'm bringin' home,
It weren't stolen and it's all my own,
It isn't a relic or a hunk of tin,
You see dear wife *it's my own damn skin.*





Songs of Sorrow



Oh how long the night—the lonely night . . .
The cold weary wait for morn and light,
The shrieking twirling shells over head,
Playing their hymns for our daily dead.

Oh the stark raving madness of it all,
The wail of the shells large and small,
Sun blotted out by their singing sorrow,
We waiting here for another tomorrow.

Tomorrow that may or may never come,
For many of these war-weary Mother's sons,
The whistle, the twang, and then the bang!
"Songs of death," the shells o'er head sang.

Oh how long the night, the wan cold night . . .
The ghostly star-streaked shell-split night,
The songs of sorrow singing shells sing,
Unending pain that war alone brings.

The Mothers, wives, sweethearts and all,
Waiting for footsteps that ne'er again fall,
We waiting here for the dawn of tomorrow,
While shells o'erhead sing their songs of sorrow.

The Ambulance Driver

"Rhymes of a Lost Batialion Doughboy"

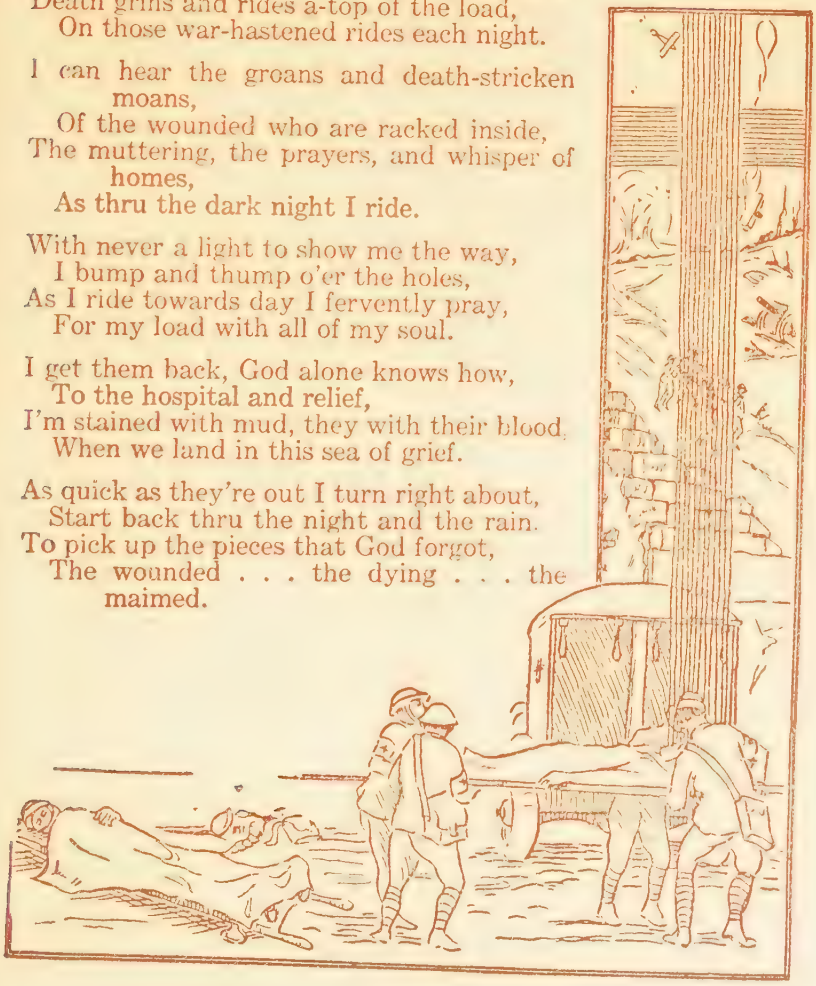
Thru Hell's back-road I drive my load,
Of the wounded and maimed of the fight,
Death grins and rides a-top of the load,
On those war-hastened rides each night.

I can hear the groans and death-stricken moans,
Of the wounded who are racked inside,
The muttering, the prayers, and whisper of homes,
As thru the dark night I ride.

With never a light to show me the way,
I bump and thump o'er the holes,
As I ride towards day I fervently pray,
For my load with all of my soul.

I get them back, God alone knows how,
To the hospital and relief,
I'm stained with mud, they with their blood,
When we land in this sea of grief.

As quick as they're out I turn right about,
Start back thru the night and the rain.
To pick up the pieces that God forgot,
The wounded . . . the dying . . . the maimed.



The Pirate Gun

List to the tale of the Pirate Gun,
Which kept on firing when war was done;
'Twas up near Stonney, back of Raucort,
Where battles were long and rations short.

'Twas Armistice night, we'd hunted all day,
For place to sleep in the "Frogs" dry hay,
When a Pirate Gun's shell screeched over the hill,
We quickly scattered and "dug in" with a will.

Thru the cold wet night, 'neath a mud cressed knoll,
We shivered and shook as we lay in our hole,
Captain looked worried things didn't seem right,
He cussed with the rest as we waited all night.

We were mad as hornets and started a hunt
For the crazy gun which had pulled that stunt;
And after we'd hunted all day in vain,
Everyone was cussing that gun and the rain.

When "Bang!" came a shot from right under our nose,
And there lay the "Pirate Gun" fully exposed,
With cries of rage we closed in on the Hun,
And that was the end of the "Pirate Gun."

Killed in Action

"Rhymes of a Lost Battalion Doughboy"

"Killed in action," so they say,
Poor little fellow had lost his way.
In Argonne Woods and up on the Vesle
He dug like fury and crawled like a snail.

My billet was small, but he didn't care,
He'd dig himself in, and stay right there.
He'd make things snappy while "diggin' in,"
He was plumb full of hell and fought to win.

Tho small of stature, he was full of fight,
And went "Over the Top" most every night,
Now all the boys knew him, up on the line,
As he kept them company all the time.

He "fell in action," game to the last,
As thru our delouser the "wee fellow" passed,
"Good-bye little cootie," we leave you in France
We "killed you in action"—and were glad of the chance.

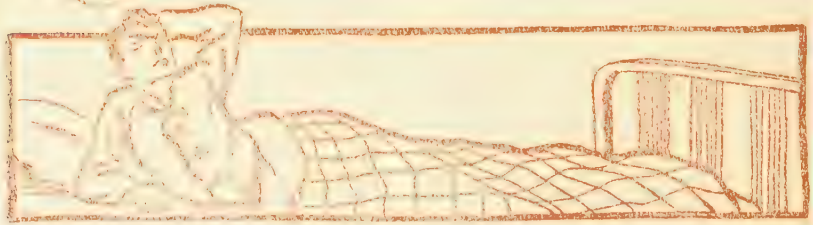
Thots!

Oh to escape the hell of it all,
Those war-ridden thots that come;
To blind forever those memories,
And sound of the bullets' hum.

To live once more as I did before,
In peace and quiet and rest;
To just forget for a little while,
It took from my life the best.

At night when everything's quiet,
And I'm lying alone in bed,
There comes a vision of battlefields,
The fight . . the maimed . . the dead.

Will I never forget that hell "O'er There,"
And the tales the battlefields tell,
The price my "Buddies" paid with "their all,"
And the places in which they fell?

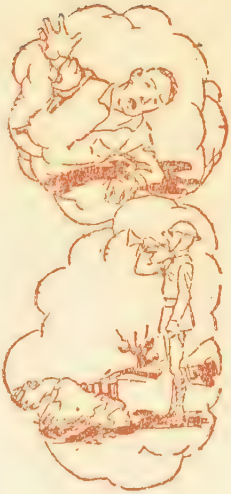


And there are my two best "Buddies,"
See them as plain as can be;
A-layin' "Out There" just crumpled heaps,
Seems like they're calling to me.

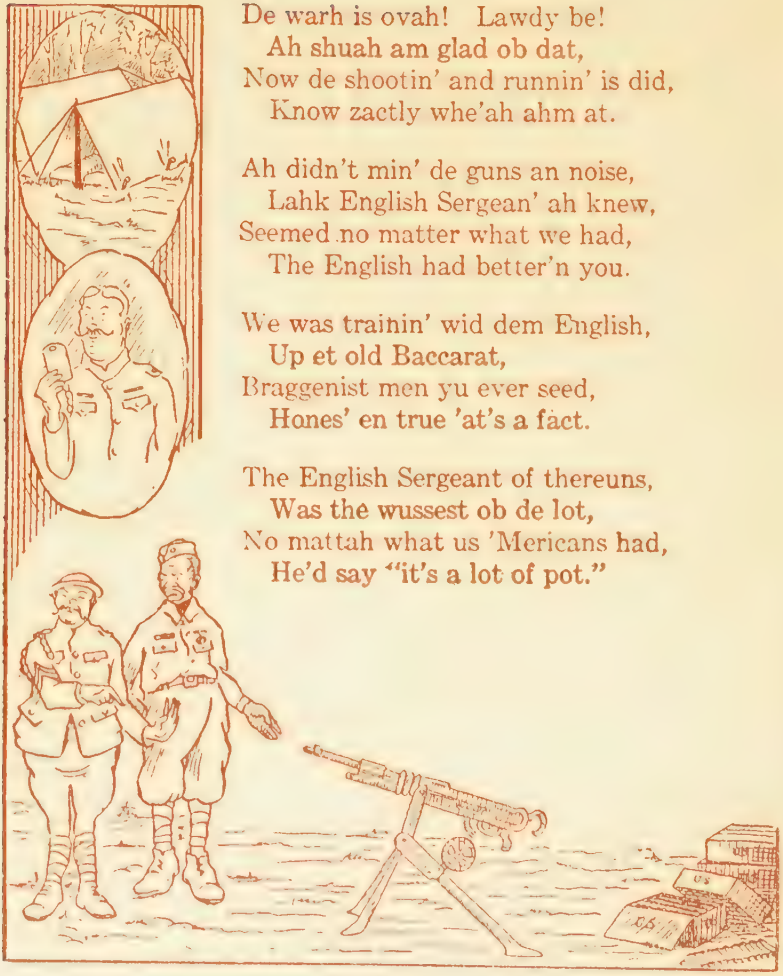
I can hear the big 'uns screech and scream,
As they go flying o'er my head;
They seem to say both night and day,
"Remember . . . the dead . . . the dead."

Sometimes I think lying here at night,
Perhaps it might have been best,
Had I paid the great price like my Buddies,
And were with them now at rest.

Oh those cursed clinging thots of war,
Haunting my brain night and day,
Dear God be merciful unto me,
And take them forever away.



Can You Beat That In England



De warh is ovah! Lawdy be!
Ah shuah am glad ob dat,
Now de shootin' and runnin' is did,
Know zactly whe'ah ahm at.

Ah didn't min' de guns an noise,
Lahk English Sergean' ah knew,
Seemed no matter what we had,
The English had better'n you.

We was trainin' wid dem English,
Up et old Baccarat,
Braggenist men yu ever seed,
Hones' en true 'at's a fact.

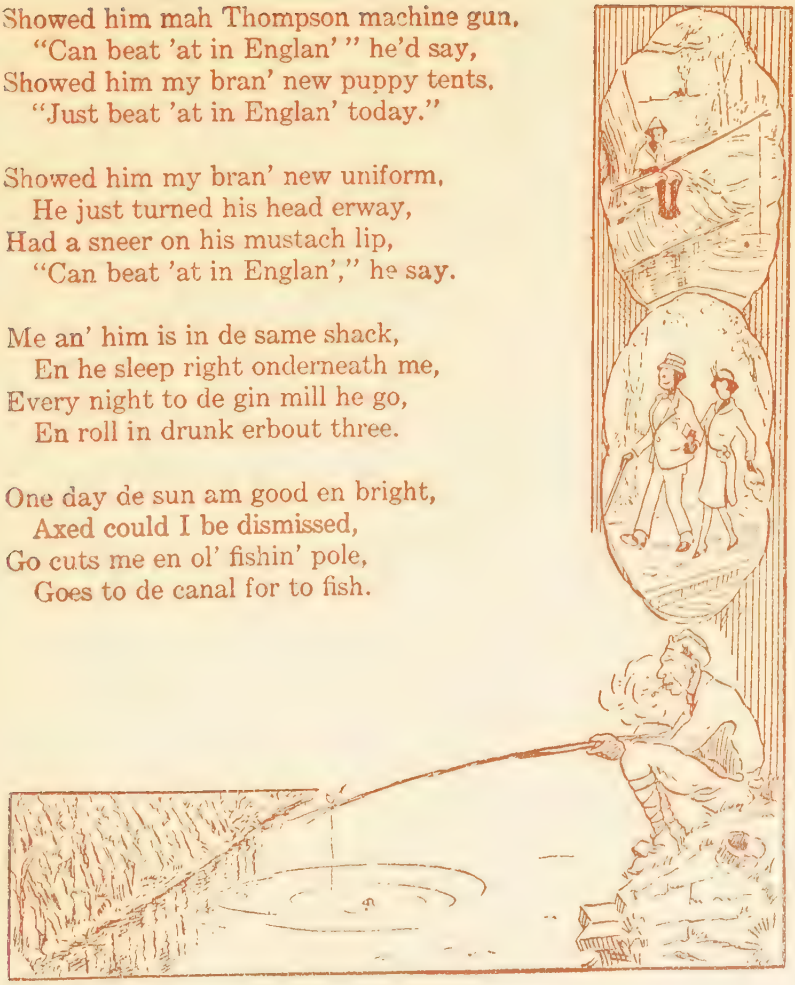
The English Sergeant of thereuns,
Was the wussest ob de lot,
No mattah what us 'Mericans had,
He'd say "it's a lot of pot."

Showed him mah Thompson machine gun,
"Can beat 'at in Englan' " he'd say,
Showed him my bran' new puppy tents,
"Just beat 'at in Englan' today."

Showed him my bran' new uniform,
He just turned his head erway,
Had a sneer on his mustach lip,
"Can beat 'at in Englan'," he say.

Me an' him is in de same shack,
En he sleep right onderneath me,
Every night to de gin mill he go,
En roll in drunk erbout three.

One day de sun am good en bright,
Axed could I be dismissed,
Go cuts me en ol' fishin' pole,
Goes to de canal for to fish.



Gets me no bites der whole day long,
Ah keeps gettin' madder en mad,
When ah thinks what all de English has got
En how little us 'Mericans had.

Ah was finkin' how to get eben,
Wid 'at mean ol' Sergean' ob mine,
When I feels a tug en er arful bite,
On de en' ob my ol' fishin' line.

Ah pulls up de line good en harhd,
"Ker-plunk" somethin' flops behin' me,
It's de bigges' ol' snappin' turtle,
That evah ah did see.

Ah grabs 'at ol' boy 'round de neck,
En I looks him square in de eye,
"Shall ah makes you into turtle soup,
Or into mock turtle pie."

De poor ol' turtle looks et me,
Like he's 'shamed to be caught,
Ah breaks out gigglin' en laughin'
Just gets me a bran' new thot.

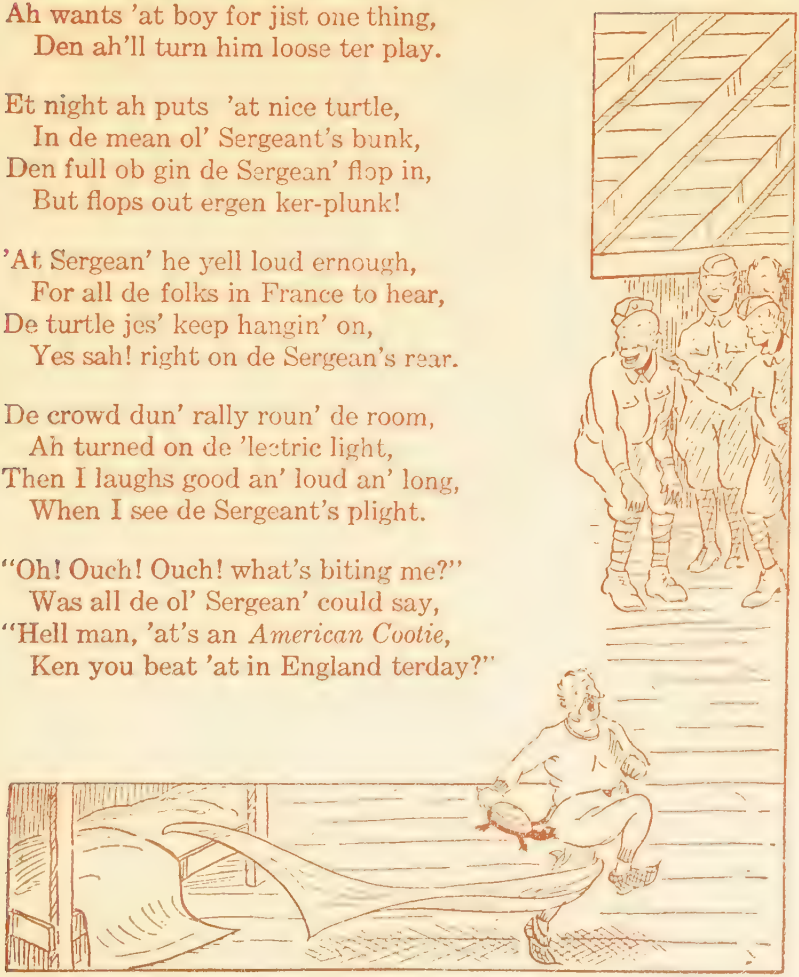
Ah takes de turtle up to mah bunk,
En tucks him kerfull erway,
Ah wants 'at boy for jist one thing,
Den ah'll turn him loose ter play.

Et night ah puts 'at nice turtle,
In de mean ol' Sergeant's bunk,
Den full ob gin de Sergean' flop in,
But flops out ergen ker-plunk!

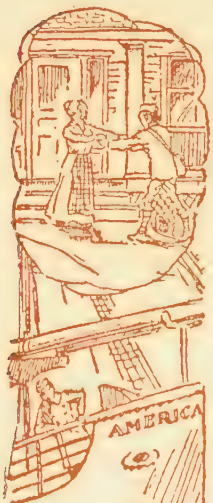
'At Sergean' he yell loud ernough,
For all de folks in France to hear,
De turtle jes' keep hangin' on,
Yes sah! right on de Sergean's rear.

De crowd dun' rally roun' de room,
Ah turned on de 'lectric light,
Then I laughs good an' loud an' long,
When I see de Sergeant's plight.

"Oh! Ouch! Ouch! what's biting me?"
Was all de ol' Sergean' could say,
"Hell man, 'at's an *American Cootie*,
Ken you beat 'at in England terday?"



Homeward Bound



Standing here on this transport,
Watching her plow through the foam,
There's just one thing I'm thinking of,
That is, "we are going home."

And oh how I wisht old pals of mine,
Were going back with me,
(By will o' God they're still in the "lines,"
Guarding Eternity).

"Homeward Bound," my it sounds nice,
(Were that my heart light as a bird's,)
Seems all the joyful sweetness of life,
Is tucked in those two words.

For many's the time while at the "front,"
In some battle of raging Hell,
I'd lift my voice to the One above,
"Please guide me home safe and well."

And I for one as I stand here alone,
Truly thank my Maker above,
That I am spared to be "Homeward Bound,"
To the ones I so dearly love.

We Are Coming Back

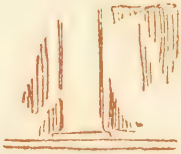
"Rhymes of a Lost Battalion Doughboy"

It's the coming back I hate worst of all,
It grates on my nerves worse than gall;
"A wreck," they will say, when I land today,
With sighs of pity they'll turn away.

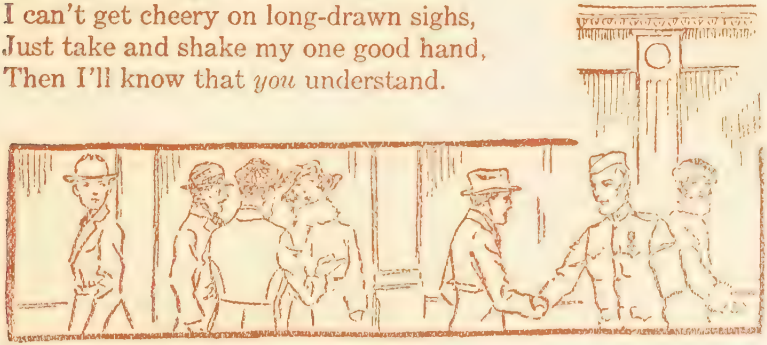
With empty sleeve and my face a mess,
I'm no more than half a man, I guess,
And it's tearing my heart slowly apart,
And I wonder how I'll make a new start.

I left these shores not so long ago,
As fit as any man who would go;
I held my head high as could be,
Was proud to fight for Liberty.

For it isn't so hard to go in and fight,
When you know your cause is more than right;
And it isn't so hard for men to die,
Hardest of all is to hear folks sigh.



To help me forget, don't sympathize,
I can't get cheery on long-drawn sighs,
Just take and shake my one good hand,
Then I'll know that *you* understand.



The Price

Now listen here, old Pal of Mine,
I've fought from the Vesle up to the Rhine,
At Baccarat and in Argonne Wood,
I did my bit as best I could.

Cut my way through oceans of wire,
And stood the test when under fire,
Lain in the cold and rain all night,
Fought like hell for what I thot was right.

Marched to bands and felt mighty proud,
Because I was one of that fighting crowd,
Now I'm back in this land of ours,
Will be in my civies in a few short hours.

Somehow or other it all seems bare,
And I feel like hell when people stare;
Some are thinking of loved ones lost,
Others of how much we're going to cost.

And that's the bunch I'm sore about,
Patriots who were so willing to shout,
Then turn us out when we came home,
On two months' pay in the world to roam.

The Returns

"Rhymes of a Lost Battalion Doughboy"

Buddy of mine, you're wrong, all wrong.
You'll soon again be one of the throng,
Not as you were when you went away,
But a proved man now, man of the day.

Boy, just think of what you've been thru
Glory of knowing that you've been true;
Think of "Buddies" whom you gave a hand,
You gained the love of fellow man.

Think of the knowledge that you gained,
When you went clear thru to Alsace-Lorraine;
Think for a bit of those poor French folk,
You helped release from the War Dog's yoke.

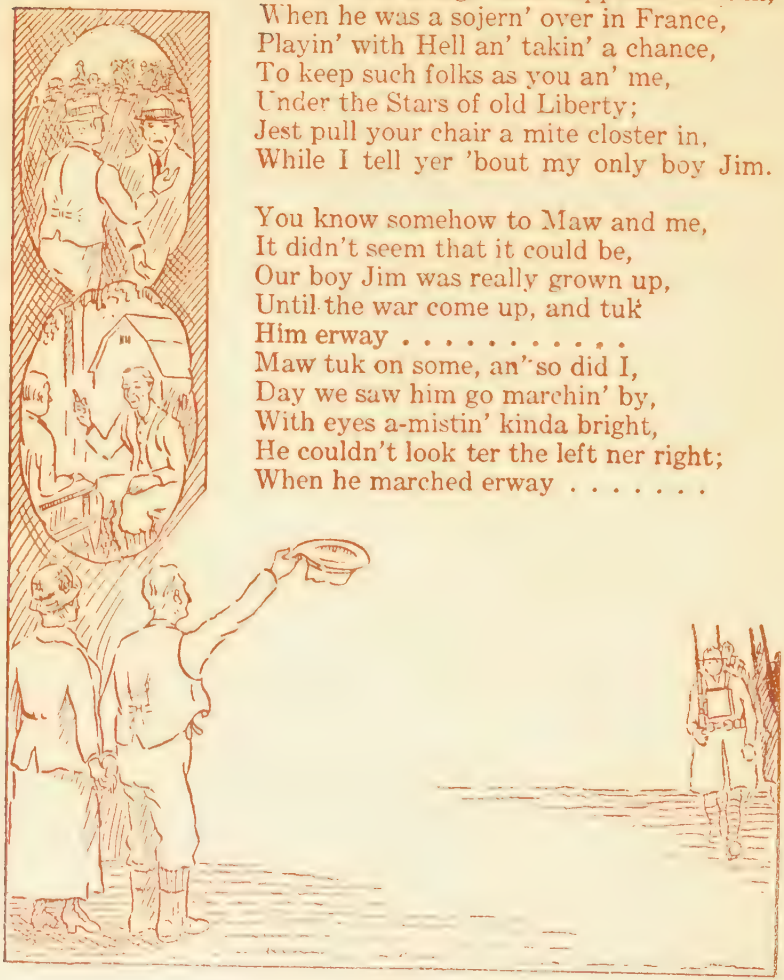
Why they expressed to you by attitude,
World of love and real gratitude;
And in one small second of that war,
You've lived a thousand lives or more.

Tho you may not have your share of gold,
What you learned "Up There" is wealth untold;
And the big thing you gained from what you've been thru,
Is that high ideal of being true.

The War is Over

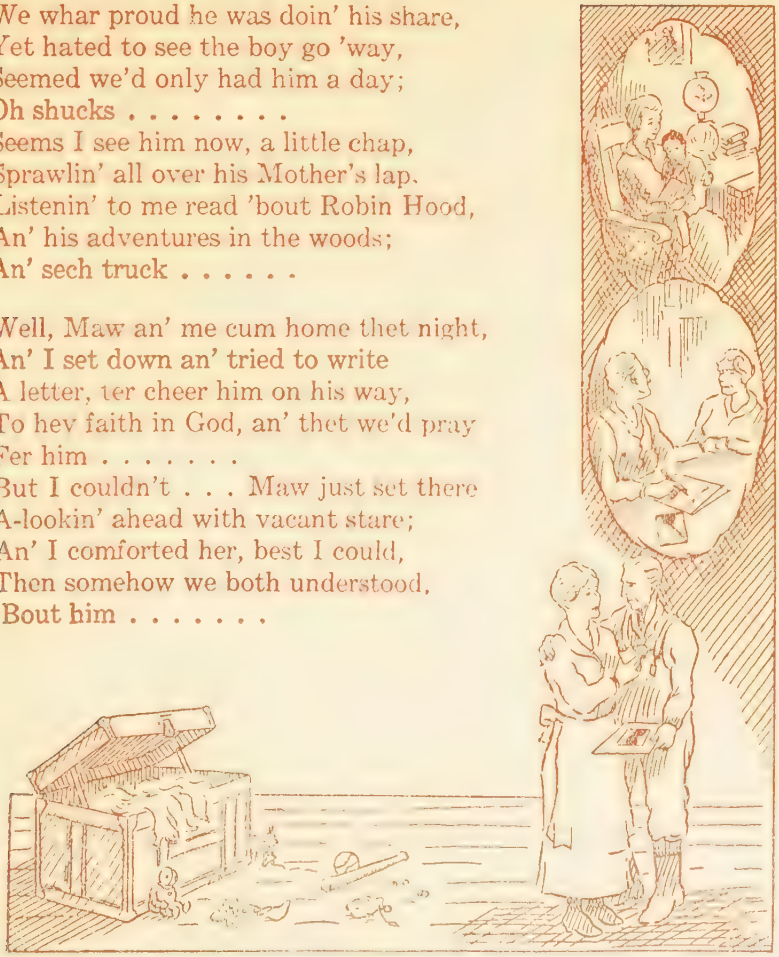
'Spect you never heard 'bout my boy Jim,
An' all the things that happened to him,
When he was a sojern' over in France,
Playin' with Hell an' takin' a chance,
To keep such folks as you an' me,
Under the Stars of old Liberty;
Jest pull your chair a mite closter in,
While I tell yer 'bout my only boy Jim.

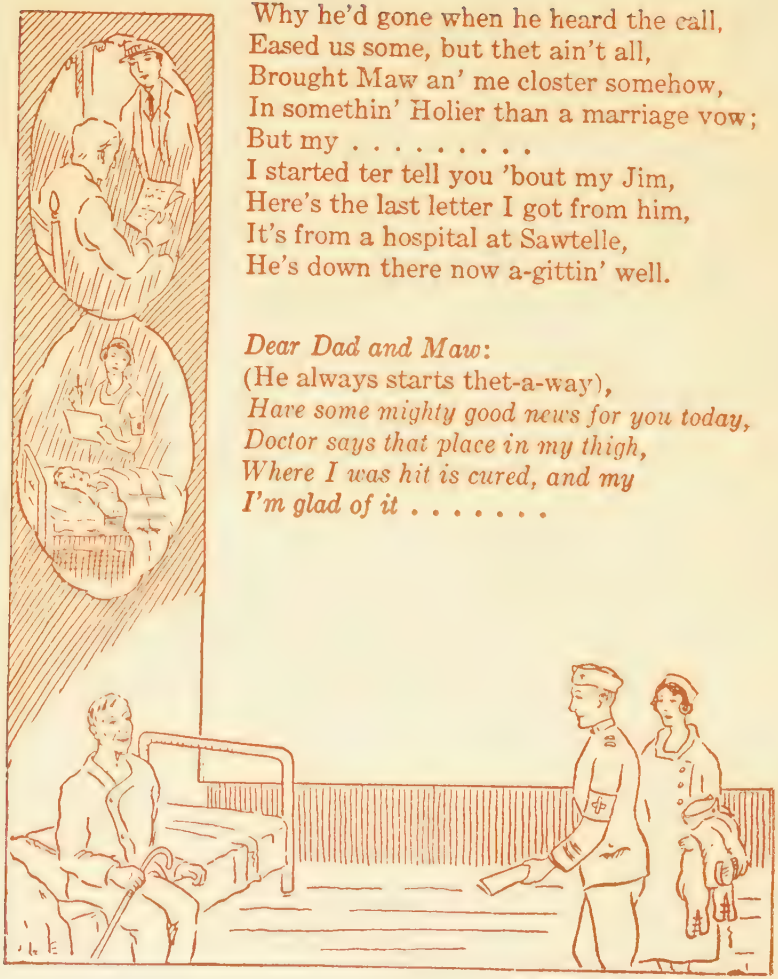
You know somehow to Maw and me,
It didn't seem that it could be,
Our boy Jim was really grown up,
Until the war come up, and tuk
Him erway . . . . . .
Maw tuk on some, an' so did I,
Day we saw him go marchin' by,
With eyes a-mistin' kinda bright,
He couldn't look ter the left ner right;
When he marched erway . . . . . .



Maw an' me knew he'd seen us there,
We whar proud he was doin' his share,
Yet hated to see the boy go 'way,
Seemed we'd only had him a day;
Oh shucks . . . . . .
Seems I see him now, a little chap,
Sprawlin' all over his Mother's lap.
Listenin' to me read 'bout Robin Hood,
An' his adventures in the woods;
An' sech truck . . . . . .

Well, Maw an' me cum home thet night,
An' I set down an' tried to write
A letter, ter cheer him on his way,
To hev faith in God, an' thet we'd pray
Fer him . . . . . .
But I couldn't . . . Maw just set there
A-lookin' ahead with vacant stare;
An' I comforted her, best I could,
Then somehow we both understood,
'Bout him . . . . . .



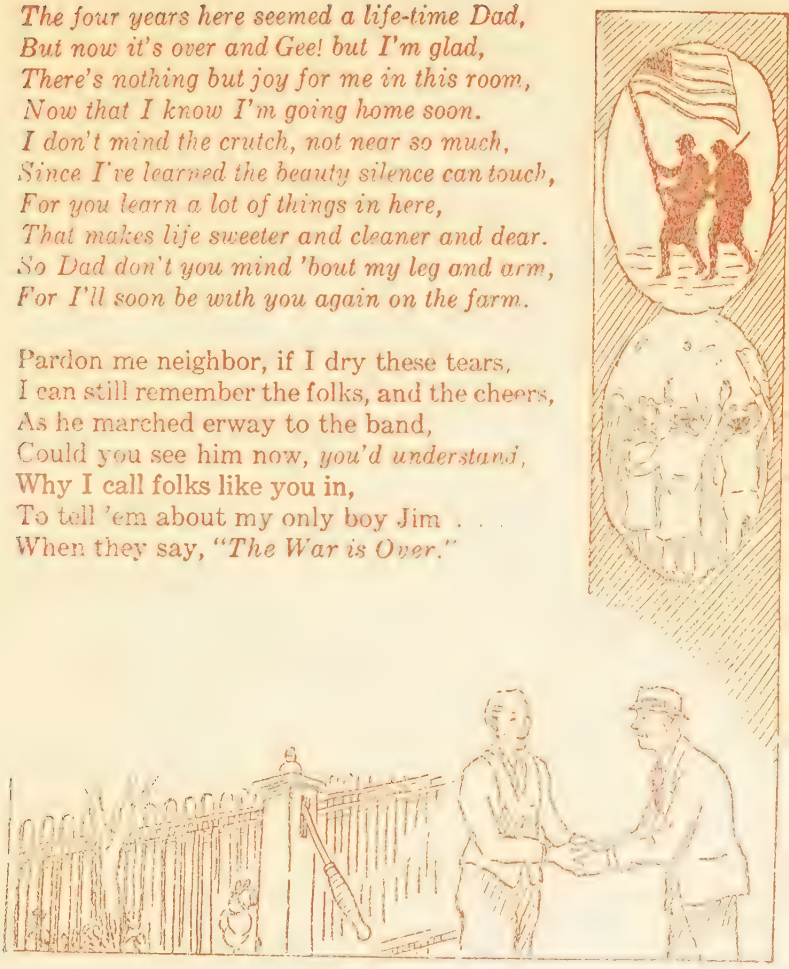


Why he'd gone when he heard the call,
Eased us some, but thet ain't all,
Brought Maw an' me closter somehow,
In somethin' Holier than a marriage vow;
But my . . . . . .
I started ter tell you 'bout my Jim,
Here's the last letter I got from him,
It's from a hospital at Sawtelle,
He's down there now a-gittin' well.

Dear Dad and Maw:
(He always starts thet-a-way),
Have some mighty good news for you today,
Doctor says that place in my thigh,
Where I was hit is cured, and my
I'm glad of it . . . . . .

The four years here seemed a life-time Dad,
But now it's over and Gee! but I'm glad,
There's nothing but joy for me in this room,
Now that I know I'm going home soon.
I don't mind the crutch, not near so much,
Since I've learned the beauty silence can touch,
For you learn a lot of things in here,
That makes life sweeter and cleaner and dear.
So Dad don't you mind 'bout my leg and arm,
For I'll soon be with you again on the farm.

Pardon me neighbor, if I dry these tears,
I can still remember the folks, and the cheers,
As he marched erway to the band,
Could you see him now, *you'd understand,*
Why I call folks like you in,
To tell 'em about my only boy Jim . . .
When they say, *"The War is Over."*



Sincerely Yours
"Buck Private" McCollum

The Buck

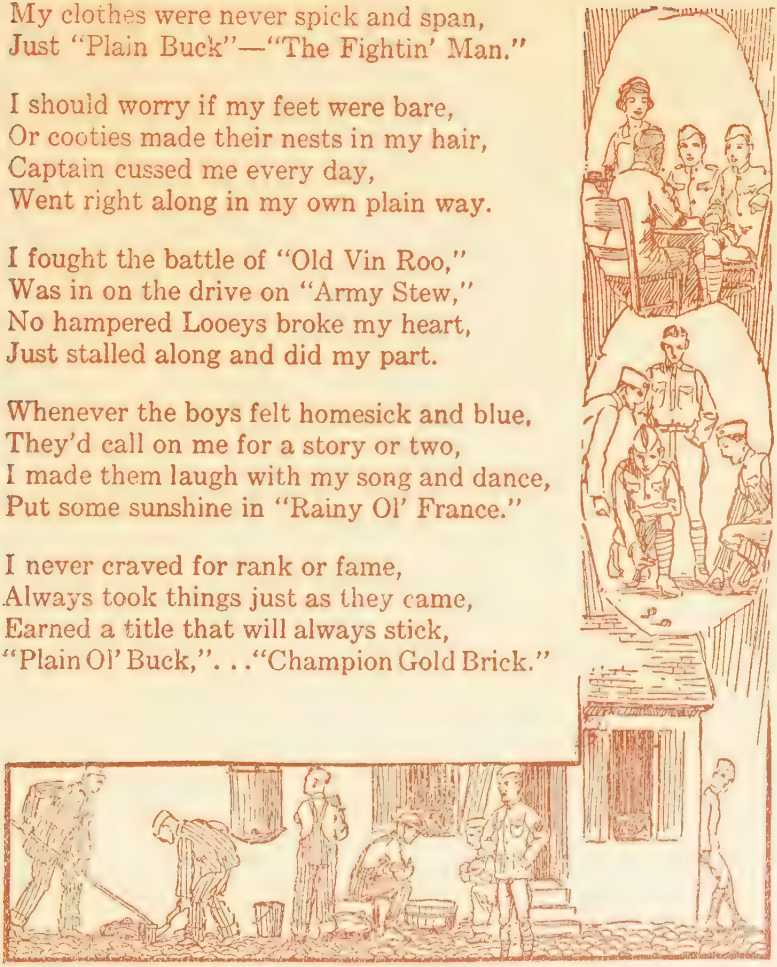
I'm a lucky son-of-a-gun,
I'm the guy that had the fun,
My clothes were never spick and span,
Just "Plain Buck"—"The Fightin' Man."

I should worry if my feet were bare,
Or cooties made their nests in my hair,
Captain cussed me every day,
Went right along in my own plain way.

I fought the battle of "Old Vin Roo,"
Was in on the drive on "Army Stew,"
No hampered Looeys broke my heart,
Just stalled along and did my part.

Whenever the boys felt homesick and blue,
They'd call on me for a story or two,
I made them laugh with my song and dance,
Put some sunshine in "Rainy Ol' France."

I never craved for rank or fame,
Always took things just as they came,
Earned a title that will always stick,
"Plain Ol' Buck,". . ."Champion Gold Brick."



Comradeship

Did you get "over," or stay in camps,
Was just as fate decreed,
'Twas all for one cause, one faith, one flag,
And we're comrades, you and me.

I care not at all were you Captain or cook,
In barracks or up in the "lines,"
'Twas comradely spirit, love and unselfishness,
That took the "gang" thru to the Rhine.

So let's "carry on" as buddies again,
With a hand on each other's shoulder,
The jewel of life is Comradeship,
To treasure as we grow older.

I have yet to see and so have you,
A spirit quite as divine,
I know in your heart you're a comrade,
And there's love for you in mine.

So let's "carry on," you and I,
Unto the end of our goal,
Keeping our treasure of Comradeship,
The womb of a nation's soul.

Phantoms

From St. Mihiel to the Vesle,
With the night wind's mournful wail,
Goes a sound that's understood,
"Gather here in Argonne Wood."

Thru the night winds wet and dreary,
Word goes on to Chateau-Thierry,
Ghostly Phantoms hear the call,
"Gather those who gave their all."

Phantom heroes gather there,
In shell-torn land, so bleak and bare.
There, beneath the sighing tree,
They are judging you and me.

By the flitting shadow light,
By the mystic shades of night,
In the one-time shell-split air,
Phantom Souls are judging there.

So listen well unto that call
Of Phantom souls who gave their all,
May you never droop your head,
Answering our own— our dead.

Afterword

Now you've finished my book of rhymes,
Hope you enjoyed what was in it,
Printers and friends advised without end,
It was best to never begin it.

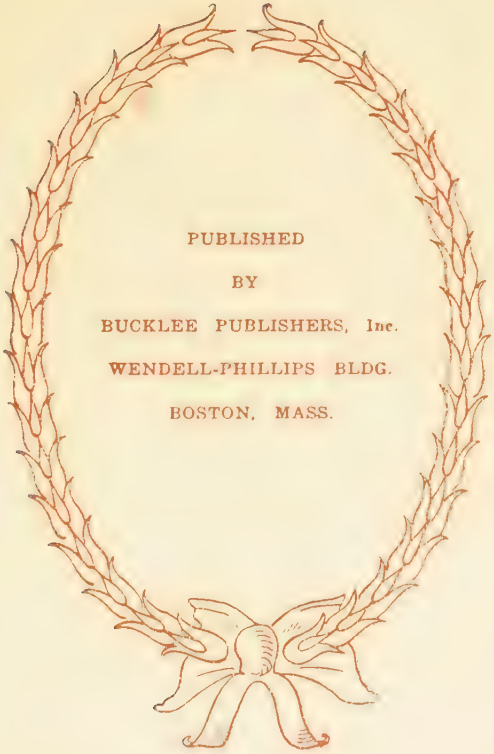
They told me that rhymers and poets,
Never were good until dead,
And now that the "War was over,"
The book would never be read.

But I felt somehow in my own heart,
That folks as a whole were fair,
So went ahead and printed instead,
What I'd found in that great "Over There."

In my halting and stumbling manner,
I have told you as best I could,
The facts as they actually were,
And by your graces the book "made good."

You gave me the courage to go ahead,
To the end of an oft dreampt goal,
As man to man and friend to friend,
I thank you with all of my soul.

"Buck Private" McCollum



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To Whom It May Concern:

"The History and Rhymes of the Lost Battalion," by L. C. McCollum, impressed me favorably as to its historical and educational value. It is a story of that episode which concerned us so closely. The entertaining poems are characteristic of that humor which always applied to the true American spirit. I appointed a Committee, composed of Major George T. McMurtry, second in command of the "pocket", Major Lucien S. Breckinridge, and Lieutenant Lester M. Brown (all of the 308th Infantry), to pass upon the merits of the book, and they have reported favorably and in part as follows:

> "We feel that the Post can very well endorse McCollum's book as historically correct and further as an exceedingly interesting and instructive memoir of one of the great deeds of the War. There is much interesting and instructive material in the book."

This book, while written partly in a humorous vein, reveals the Hell thru which the American soldier passed. It cannot fail to arouse that patriotism and love of country hidden in every true American heart, and is a story that can be proudly handed down from generation to generation. I wish to add that at a meeting of the Post the men unanimously voted that "We endorse McCollum's book."

Arthur C. Brucks

Arthur C. Brucks,
Post Commander,
308th Infantry Post
New York City.